

# JUDAISM

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**RELIGION**

**WAR AND PEACE**

**YOUTH**

**THE KIBBUZ**

**INTERFAITH**

**INGATHERING OF THE EXILES**

**WOMEN**

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JUDAISM, conceived as a free and non-partisan organ, is dedicated to the creative discussion and exposition of the religious, moral and philosophical concepts of Judaism and their relevance to the problems of modern society. Through an exploration of the meaning and needs of the Jewish experience, it hopes to widen the channels of communication between Jews and to affirm Jewish verity and vitality to the world at large.

The Board of Editors, composed of distinguished scholars and thinkers drawn from every segment of Jewish life, is vested with full authority and responsibility for the contents of this Journal. Views and opinions expressed in the articles and reviews are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the American Jewish Congress, which is sponsoring the publication of this Journal as a service to the American Jewish community and to all who seek to understand the nature of the Jewish tradition and its modern significance.

*American Jewish Congress*

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# JUDAISM

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<i>The Wonder of The Age and The Ages— A Salute to Israel</i>	ROBERT GORDIS	132
<i>Religion in The State of Israel</i>	ADIN STEINSALZ	140
<i>The State of Religion in Israel</i>	JOSEPH S. BENTWICH	151
<i>The Jewish Way of War</i>	ELIEZER LIVNEH	157
<i>The Youth: Jews, Israelis or Both?</i>	SIMON N. HERMAN	167
<i>The Jewishness of Israel's Youth</i>	JACK J. COHEN	173
<i>The Kibbuz: The State of The Dream</i>	MOSHE KEREM	182
<i>Towards a New Jewish-Christian Understanding in Israel</i>	COOS SCHONEVELD	194
<i>Interfaith Relations in Israel</i>	ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN	202
<i>The Ingathering of the Exiles</i>	YEHUDA NINI	210
<i>The Israeli Woman</i>	ANNABELLE YUVAL	224
<i>Women in Israel</i>	JUDITH NEULANDER ELIZUR	237
<i>The Status of The Woman in Israel</i>	SHULAMIT ALONI	248

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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a world-view on the issues that are timeless—the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

*Judaism* will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God."—From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Renaissance of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.

# *The Wonder of the Age and the Ages— A Salute to Israel*

ROBERT GORDIS

CONTEMPORARY MAN IS JADED WITH WONDERS and sated with horrors. The modern mood is neither joy nor awe, neither terror nor wrath, but boredom. The latest exploration of the moon, perhaps the last in this century, received little television coverage and evoked even less interest among the masses. The daily revelations of corruption in high places, whether in the Federal government or on state and municipal levels, evoke a yawn and a turning of the newspaper to the sporting page. The senseless and bloody civil war in Ireland, the callous and calculated air raids in Southeast Asia, the savagery of terrorist murders of civilians in Lydda and Munich—nothing seems capable of arousing indignation or even raising the blood pressure. Drugs have lost their novelty; sex displays on stage and screen are beginning to pall. Hence, moviemakers are heaping blood and violence on the screen; football and hockey teams practice increasingly unabashed mayhem in what is still anachronistically called “sporting events.” All represent desperate attempts to stimulate the jaded appetites of a generation steeped in ennui. Modern man is secretly too frightened of the present to wish to prognosticate the future. He finds 1984 too horrible to contemplate, and so he immunizes himself as well as he is able against the sense of wonder, the feeling of awe, the emotion of indignation and the capacity for admiration.

Only one major event in twentieth-century history still has the power to stir the hearts of men—the miracle of the birth of Israel, that has been followed by a quarter-century of progress and growth in the arts of peace and by incredible victory in its war for survival. The people and the State are not a miracle, but a complex of wonders constantly revealing new facets. Were a poet seeking means to do justice to Israel, he would need to fall back on the liturgical formula of *Dayenu*, “it would have been enough,” familiar from the Passover *Haggadah*. The well-known hymn is a recital of the miracles vouchsafed to Israel at its birth, the Exodus from Egypt, the giving of the Torah at Sinai, and their climax, the entrance into the Holy Land and the building of the Temple.

It may, however, be argued that the modern miracle of the rebirth of Israel is more remarkable than its emergence on the stage of history thirty-five hundred years ago. It has been an invariable law of history that the exile of a nation meant its destruction, either physically through genocide from without, or spiritually through absorption from within,

and its disappearance into the conquering nation or other groups. The people of Israel continue to be the only exception to this rule. To be sure, nations like the Irish and the Poles lost their independence, but the bulk of the population remained on its ancestral soil and was thus capable of keeping alive its national memories and the possibility of revolt against its conqueror. The Jewish people affords the only instance of a nation exiled from its land for two millennia, suffering untold agonies during the centuries of its dispersion, and finally returning to re-establish its life in its native home.

That is not all. The immemorial prayer of Israel has been "peace," but that could scarcely have been God's short-term plan for Israel or He would not have placed their Promised Land at the crossroads of three continents, subject to incursion scores of times in those forty centuries, starting with the ancient Canaanites and continuing through the modern British. That the Jewish people in Palestine was exposed to cultural influences of incredible variety and richness was a recompense for the agony of defeat and conquest which they suffered. The Jewish people lived in its homeland for much less than half of its history, and was independent for less than one-seventh.

Yet there was wine still more bitter than exile in the cup of Israel's destiny. The nineteen-hundred-year-old exile was climaxed by the most horrible example of bestiality in human experience, the Nazi Holocaust.

Nor is this all. While the Nazi campaign of extermination was at its peak, their hands were only a little more deeply stained than those of their enemies in the free world, who stood idly by as the blood of six million men, women and children was poured out, raising neither hand nor voice to save these innocents. Yet out of the hellish flames which consumed two-thirds of European Jewry, the State of Israel emerged phoenix-like to establish anew the eternal life of an eternal people, thus cheating the murderers of their victory and converting the victims into triumphant martyrs.

The establishment of the State of Israel as a democratic island in a sea of feudalism and social backwardness would be wonder enough, even without the necessity of waging three major wars in twenty-five years. The matchless heroism of this quarter century is greater even than the record of indomitable courage written eighteen centuries ago, when three times within seventy years Jews rebelled against the awesome power of Rome. In the year 70 C.E., the First War against the Roman Empire, hopeless as it seemed to all sober minds and as, indeed, it proved to be, led to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the loss of national autonomy. Forty years later, in 115 C.E., in the reign of the Emperor Trajan, the entire Middle East was the scene of the Second War, which apparently broke out in the Diaspora and exacted a heavy toll from the Roman power. Unwilling to learn when they were beaten, the



Jews revolted again twenty years later, in 132 C.E., in the Third War against Rome, under the banner of Bar Kokhba—three rebellions in three score years. Yet heroic as were these three wars, they all ended in defeat. The miracle of the State of Israel is that its three wars for self-preservation have ended in victory.

Even this is not all. To have fought against odds of twenty to one and won—not once, but three times—would be miracle enough. But to have impressed an entire people into military service yet kept the national spirit free from militarism, to have fought an enemy to whom no savagery was unthinkable and yet not to have yielded to hate, to have suffered the barbarous and senseless murder of civilians and met the challenge with extraordinary resourcefulness and initiative and not ever having resorted to the death penalty for the assassins, is a moral victory of unparalleled dimensions. In this crucial respect, the State of Israel has attained an ethical level of which no other nation, Christian or other, has shown itself capable, and which the world, including the Christian churches, has studiously ignored. As one observes the troubled history of the twentieth century, one is tempted to conclude that “Christian ethics” is the ethics preached by the Christian world to be practiced by Jews.

Finally, the mere physical survival of the State of Israel in the face of such massive problems would have been a unique miracle. It is climaxed by the fact that, in the world today, it is the only land in the Middle East which has become a seed-bed for an incredible flowering of all the arts of peace, with extraordinary contributions to science, art, music and literature. A beginning, at least, has been made in the difficult and complex task of the creative preservation of an ancient tradition within the context of modern life.

No wonder, then, that the gray clouds of hopelessness, cynicism and boredom that characterize this hour in the history of Western man are dissipated in the bright sunlight of Israeli life. No one, be he Jew or Gentile, who possesses any capacity to respond to greatness, can visit the State of Israel without being moved to admiration, wonder and faith in the human potential.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel on the 5th of Iyyar, which comes this year on May 7, 1973, is, therefore, an occasion worthy of celebration wherever men still harbor any respect for the human spirit and any hope for human life. The celebration of the jubilee will take on untold forms, both in Israel and in the Diaspora. The highest tribute, however, is not the mere expression of congratulation or of pride in the achievements of our Israeli brothers, or even thanksgiving to the Guardian of Israel. Every achievement is basically an opportunity to face new problems, and the massive accomplishments of Israel are matched by the colossal problems confronting it.

This journal, dedicated to the philosophy, religion and ethics of Judaism, believes that the birthday gift it is best suited to offer to the State of Israel, to its indomitable Prime Minister, Golda Meir, to its immortal architect, David Ben Gurion, and to its people—young and old—is a survey of the spiritual and moral state of the nation, a candid analysis of the problems that confront it and, perhaps, some insight into the lines of progress that should be followed in the next quarter-century and beyond.

Manifestly, not all aspects of the complex structure of Israeli life and thought can be surveyed within the confines of one issue of the journal. The areas which are treated include: the state of religion in Israel, the Jewish attitude towards militarism, the problems of the youth, the achievements of the kibbutz movement, the progress of interfaith relations, the *kibbutz galuyot* of the Oriental communities, and the problems involving the status of women.

\* \* \*

A few observations are in order with regard to the editorial procedures involved in the preparation of this issue. In accordance with the policy of complete freedom of expression, which I laid down at the inception of this journal, the articles have not been changed with regard to either form or substance, the responsibility for the views expressed being solely that of the respective authors themselves. There is only one exception. In several instances, more than one paper deals with the same issue from varying perspectives. Where the statistics or other data are cited by several authors, the repetition was eliminated in order to avoid monotony.

It should also be added that there are inevitable problems involved in translation. Thus, in the State of Israel, the term *dati* "religious," is applied almost exclusively to the Orthodox groups. The rendering of this Hebrew term as "religious," in English, would be completely meaningless. The term "Orthodox" has, therefore, been used in the proper contexts. On the other hand, the term *mesorati* "traditional" is applied in Israel to those who observe the fundamental practices of Jewish tradition without necessarily accepting the Orthodox rationale. This large and amorphous group corresponds roughly to the Conservatives in America. However, the use of the term "Conservative" in reference to this group in Israel would be confusing in view of the existence of an official Conservative movement in the country. The term "traditional" has, therefore, been preserved in the text, but the reader will need to keep in mind what is meant. Finally, the Hebrew word, *kofrim*, literally, "heretics," is used primarily by the Orthodox to refer to those who do not accept the Orthodox regimen or practice or belief.

\* \* \*



It is scarcely a military secret that the status of religion in Israel is a highly explosive subject and a source of continuing controversy, with new "incidents" emerging regularly during the quarter century of Israeli independence. Two sharply differing perspectives on the state of religion in Israel are presented in the papers by *Adin Steinsalz* and *Joseph Bentwich*. Rabbi Steinsalz is one of the most remarkable personalities in the religious life of contemporary Israel, who commands wide respect in circles far removed from his unswervingly Orthodox position. His incisive and insightful paper, "Religion In the State of Israel," presents the contemporary religious situation in Israel, with the constant confrontation between the secularist majority and the religious minority, as seen from the vantage point of Orthodoxy.

That the Orthodoxy have no monopoly on religious concern is clear from the paper by Joseph Bentwich, a sensitive and highly regarded exponent of Jewish traditional values and practices, both ethical and ritual, from a modernist point of view. In "The State of Religion in Israel" he writes as a spokesman for the wide spectrum of non-Orthodox elements who are seeking a viable religious world-view and life-style, rooted in Jewish tradition, yet distinct from the varieties of Orthodoxy which derive from Eastern Europe and constitute the only version of Judaism that has official recognition and power in Israel today.

It is regrettable that several other writers, who had agreed to contribute treatments of this crucial theme from their differing perspectives, were unable to honor their commitments. Nevertheless, the papers here presented offer two welcome interpretations, from diverse standpoints, of the state of religion in the State of Israel.

Earlier in this paper, we called attention to the remarkable phenomenon of an entire nation compelled to place all of its men, women and young people in the defense forces, yet keeping itself free from the militaristic spirit. This extraordinary, ethical triumph is analyzed by *Eliezer Livneh* in his paper, "The Jewish Way of War." There comes to mind Golda Meir's moving utterance, "I do not resent the Egyptians' senseless killing of our boys as much as I resent their compelling us to kill theirs."

It is a truism that the future of Israel, as of every people, is to be sought in the character of its young people. In recent years, much concern has been expressed in various quarters regarding the sense of Jewish identification of Israeli-born youth. It seemed evident that, for the majority who were educated outside the religious schools, Jewish tradition was virtually a closed book. Some observers went so far as to decry the emergence of a new type, *goyim medabberim ivrit*, "Gentiles

speaking Hebrew." That this situation had some basis in reality became clear from the fact that the Israeli Department of Education introduced courses into the general school system on *Toda-ah Yehudit*, "Jewish consciousness," which sought to give the students at least a familiarity with Jewish traditional practices and ideas. The general verdict seems to be that these courses have thus far proved ineffective. Closely related to this estrangement from Jewish tradition has been the feeling that Israeli youth do not share a sense of brotherhood with world Jewry, and that the nineteen hundred year history of Jews in the Diaspora has all but been blotted out for them.

Two writers in this issue offer significant, though, in the very nature of things, partial answers to these questions. In his paper, "The Youth: Jews, Israelis, or Both?" *Simon Herman* offers a précis of his significant researches into the attitudes of Israeli youth which he has studied and presented in his volume, *Israelis and Jews: The Continuity of an Identity*. *Jack J. Cohen*, who has been working intensively with Israeli university youth and other elements of the general population, presents a non-statistical interpretation of his impressions and conclusions in his paper, "The Jewishness of Israeli Youth."

Basically, both writers agree that while the fears expressed are not without some merit, they have been exaggerated. They are convinced that there is a solid core of Jewish feeling among Israeli youth, upon which it will be possible to build an ever deeper sense of identification with Diaspora Jewry and a greater measure of appreciation of the creative aspects of Diaspora Jewry during the long years since the Roman Exile. In spite of the legitimate pride which Israeli youth takes in its homeland and its achievements, they are not blind to the centuries of earlier Jewish history and to the problems and needs of millions of brother Jews today throughout the world.

It is universally recognized that the most creative achievement of Israeli life has been the kibbutz, and that, conversely, the kibbutz has contributed far beyond its numerical ratio in the population to all sectors of Israeli society. In recent years, it has been widely argued that the kibbutz has passed its crest and that henceforth its influence would become less visible as its ideals become increasingly dissipated in a bourgeois society. *Moshe Kerem*, a member of Kibbutz Geshar Haziv, offers an impressive refutation of this thesis in his paper, "The Kibbutz—The State of the Dream." Any significant discussion of the kibbutz and of its role in Israel and the Jewish world must, henceforth, reckon with the insights and conclusions presented in this paper. It offers a fair and balanced presentation of the kibbutz, both in the past and the present, and analyzes the social and technological changes which it is undergoing.

It is generally taken for granted that the inter-faith movement has not only its origin, but its *raison d'être*, in the Diaspora, where Jews constitute a minority living to a greater or lesser degree on sufferance and at the pleasure of the majority. Hence, inter-religious activities have no real basis in the State of Israel. Even in the Diaspora, it is frequently maintained, the Christian motive for inter-faith activities, however disguised, is conversionist in character, and the Jewish goal is to win acceptance, or at least "tolerance," on the part of the majority. For these reasons, inter-faith activities have been looked upon in many Jewish circles with considerable skepticism and distaste.

This negative attitude became dominant in the Jewish community after the unforgettable and ineradicable record of indifference to, and acquiescence in, the Nazi extermination of six million Jews on the part of the Christian world. This cardinal sin was compounded by the resounding silence of the Christian world with regard to Nasser's threat to the survival of the State of Israel in May, 1967. Then came the scarcely disguised sense of grave disappointment at the Israeli victory in the Six Day War among the leaders of the Christian religious Establishment, with only a few exceptions.

The suspicions regarding motives in the inter-faith movement cannot be dismissed out of hand, because they undoubtedly rest upon a substratum of fact. But only to a degree. Other factors enter into the picture as well. There is a growing recognition that in a pluralistic society the various religious, cultural and ethnic groups must, to borrow Ben Franklin's phrase, "either hang together or hang separately." If there is to be peace, and not merely an armed truce, a greater measure of understanding, particularly with regard to the differences among groups, is essential, or the fabric of society will be torn to shreds. The process is, indeed, far advanced already. There is a growing recognition, too, that the full truth about life is only with God and that each religious faith and tradition has something of significance to contribute to the understanding of all men of their place in the universe.

When factors such as these are taken into account, it is really not so astonishing that inter-faith activity has established a foothold in the State of Israel, the birthplace of Judaism and Christianity and a land sacred to Islam as well. The movement is, however, no replica of activities in the United States or Great Britain. There are special problems and pressures in Israeli inter-faith relations that are rooted in the present situation in the Middle East, which need to be taken into account, if the present status and future destiny of Israel is to be understood.

The motivations, problems and achievements of the inter-faith movement in Israel, modest though its accomplishments be thus far, are evaluated from the Christian point of view by *Coos Schoneveld*, in "Towards a New Jewish-Christian Understanding in Israel." *Israel Gold-*

*stein*, the distinguished American rabbi and Zionist leader, presents the Jewish perspective in "Interfaith Relations in Israel." Both of these religious leaders have been active in the various institutions that have arisen in the State of Israel in the field of inter-group relations. The reader will, undoubtedly, find the similarities and divergences in their reactions interesting and illuminating.

If one searches for a phrase to express the quintessence of the miracle of the rebirth of Israel, it would be the traditional phrase *kibbuz galuyot*, "the ingathering of the exiles." Today, the State of Israel is home to Jews from every corner of the globe, representing sixty countries or more. Though Diaspora communities of varying size, from many millions to a handful, still continue to live and function with varying degrees of vitality, one sector of world Jewry has been completely "ingathered" within the borders of the State of Israel—the Jews of Arab countries where they had resided for many centuries. The special character of these Oriental communities and the problems they face are discussed in "The Ingathering of the Exiles: the Oriental Communities," by *Yehuda Nini*, who is himself a Yemenite Jew, and understands the problems of his brethren from within.

One may differ with his assessment at many points, as in his downgrading of the Masada episode in 70 C.E. because of his conviction that freedom, one's country, and the like, are less sacred and important than life. This standpoint leaves no room for heroism or martyrdom. It is, incidentally, contradicted by Nini's own praise of the unsuccessful Messianic movement which arose in Oriental countries during the Middle Ages. Other judgments in his paper will undoubtedly evoke difference of viewpoint as well. All readers, however, will be stimulated by his trenchant approach to the problems of Oriental Jewry, which many observers regard as the major domestic issue confronting the State of Israel.

One of the beneficial by-products of the Women's Liberation Movement has been the transformation of a statistical item into a concrete existential fact—that women constitute at least 50% of the human race. No survey of any given society can henceforth content itself with dismissing the condition of its women in a footnote or in an appendix. The State of Israel is no exception.

In almost every respect, Israel is a land of paradoxes, so that virtually any generalization made about it is both true and false. The advanced social and intellectual character of Israel society is undeniable, yet it is accompanied by many features that are far from progressive. Thus, Israel is governed by a Prime Minister who is a woman. By and large, however, the status of women lags far behind their position in other democratic countries.

Three papers in this issue explore the position of women and the problems confronting them. Perhaps the most comprehensive summary available in English of the facts regarding the status of women in Israel is presented by *Annabelle Yuval* in her paper, "The Israeli Woman." It is the result of painstaking research into the demographic and legal facts involved. *Judith Neulander Elizur*, in "Women in Israel," offers a balanced analysis of the data, noting the lights and shadows in the picture of women. Finally, the disabilities under which women still labor in Israel is the subject of a passionate and trenchant critique by *Shulamit Aloni*, who, in "The Status of the Woman in Israel," highlights the road that must yet be traveled before the promise of Israeli society approaches fulfillment.

All the contributors to this issue of JUDAISM, except for the Editor, are citizens or permanent residents of the State of Israel, so that they speak out of an immediacy of experience and understanding of the situation. It should not be necessary, however, to affirm vigorously the right and duty of Jews everywhere to be heard on all issues confronting the State of Israel. Though the writers differ in background and outlook, they are united, as are we, by a love for Israel and the concern for its role in the larger family of mankind. Through these pages we salute the State and the people of Israel on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Israel with the Biblical greeting: כֹּהֵן לַחַי "Thus—to the living!"

# *Religion in the State of Israel*

ADIN STEINSALZ

ONE OF THE INTERESTING FEATURES ABOUT religion in Israel and, in a way, about the State of Israel itself, is the extreme variety of views on the subject held by people who look on from the outside. There are those who claim that Israel is basically a theocracy, only slightly camouflaged as a modern democratic state and that the real power is in the hands of a clerical caste who are assisted by, or who have under their dominion, the political leaders of the country. At the opposite extreme are those who feel that Israel is not only "un-Jewish," lacking in Jewish content and values, but that it is an atheistic country, a political entity in which religion has inferior status and less influence than it does in almost any other country in the world.

Oddly enough, both of those points of view are, to a degree, correct. To be sure, they are also based on shallow observations of the conditions in the country, making no effort to penetrate to the deeper Jewish aspects of the situation as a whole. On one hand, the first category of onlookers see that the State is based on its Jews, and, to survive, has to maintain a dominance of the Jewish religion and of the Jewish people over and above other religions and peoples. Thus, they see that the State regards Saturday as the official day of rest and the Jewish holidays are the official holidays of the State. The sacred tongue of the Bible has become the language of the land (not without extraordinary social and educational effort), and the Bible is a major part of every school curriculum. In addition, the laws of marriage and personal status are entirely bound to the traditional, religious code of laws.

On the other hand, the others justifiably claim that all of these features of the Jewish State should be understood very differently. Instead of religious significance, almost all of the Jewish characteristics of Israel have secular and national meaning. Outside of the country, anyone (especially a Jew) who receives some religious instruction, will identify the Sabbath, the holidays, and the language of the Bible with religion, and only with religion. But, in Israel, the Sabbath is kept pretty much as Sunday is kept in other countries. Hebrew has become a secular language, and is increasingly under the influence of Western languages, mainly English, in respect to composition, new words, and lines of thought. The Bible is simply the basis of Hebrew culture and the passages that are learned in schools are usually of general humanist content, or they form part of the national self-justification for contemporary political devel-

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opments. Altogether, Israel is one of the states in the world in which religion has relatively little influence in culture or politics. The rabbis, as clergymen, do not constitute a factor in the lives of the great majority of Israelis. Even the word "religious" has become a blameworthy epithet among large sections of the population, and many, if not most, of the leaders of the nation consider themselves atheists, at least insofar as they are not active members of any religious community. It is a state in which an attempt by the late Kadish Luz, then the Speaker of the Knesset, to open a session with the blessing, *Shehehiyanu*, was met with fierce opposition from all sides (including his own party); and where most of the citizens of the country show little interest in anything related to religion.

We see, then, that both of these views of Israel are, to a certain extent, true. But the enigma of the apparent contradiction remains. In order better to comprehend the problem as a whole and to see clearly the attitudes presently involved, it would be in place to note the approach held by the "founding fathers" of the State of Israel. The real "founding fathers" are doubtless the generation of the Second Aliyah, who established their influence within the half century before the State was born in 1948. To be sure, there was an even older Yishuv of religious settlers in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed and Tiberias, and there was a First Aliyah of the Bilu movement and of the early pioneers. But it was the people of the Second Aliyah who shaped the country's image for generations. They, and the Third Aliyah, who hardly differed from them in most respects, supplied the majority of the country's leaders; they developed the language and customs, the political and cultural forms. In short, it is essential to understand the minds and personalities of the Second Aliyah in order to grasp what is happening in Israel today.

Spiritually and religiously, almost all of the people of the Second Aliyah derived their variety of political ideologies and moral ideas from the different Socialist parties of the Russia of that time, which included Poland and Lithuania. In line with the general policy of the social-democratic movement (which only later changed its policy) and most of the other liberal and revolutionary movements, they were consciously atheistic and considered religion and everything connected with it as part of the old, corrupt world that had to be replaced by a new and "free" one. Furthermore, the Jewish religion was, for most of the Second Aliyah immigrants to Palestine, an intrinsic part of the Diaspora, which they vehemently rejected, in principle as well as in practice. The conservative Orthodox circles of Eastern Europe were not only opposed to "progress," in so far as this was bound up with atheistic social ideology, they were also opposed, to a lesser degree, although for similar reasons, to Zionism. Rejection of the Jewish life in the ghettos implied, for them, a rejection of the religious ideas and traditions that constituted its

framework. At the same time, these young people, who were so intellectually tied in with all the social idealism of the period preceding the Russian revolution, were also different from the young revolutionaries in at least one main issue—their relation to *Erez Yisrael*. Other young Jews, who were fascinated by the vision of freedom implicit in the progressive spirit of the times, tried to merge completely with the gentiles among whom they lived and became a significant part of the vanguard of various communist, socialist and revolutionary parties, while those who felt their allegiance to be primarily with their own people became the nucleus of a Jewish national-socialist movement called the *Bund*, which saw the future of the people within Russia. It was only a small proportion who turned away from Russia to the Land of Israel. They did so, not because of any political far-sightedness (although they may have ascribed it to themselves in later years); they were simply romantic souls who permitted their feelings about their historical tradition, the Jewish people and the legend of the Return to Zion, to prevail over their agnostic, socially “progressive” ideas. They were simply true to an undeniably deep, emotional relationship to their homes and to their upbringing in the Jewish traditional manner. For them, the transition to Socialist Zionism was not a complete break with their personal religious past, it was a kind of continuation, a raising of all that was good and beautiful in Judaism to a wider, freer, more universally human framework. In any case, it was an attempt to sustain Jewish life. For this life seemed to them to have become distorted and spoiled, and they felt that it could be renewed and perpetuated only by drawing inspiration from its more distant past, such as Biblical times, the era of the Maccabees, of Bar Kokhba or of the Golden Age of Spanish Jewry. Many of those who, for ideological reasons, had ceased to pray, could not repress their emotional attachment to the prayers themselves. Jewish institutions, such as the rabbinate, the *Shulhan Arukh* or *mizvot* had become, in their eyes, negative and expendable—nonwithstanding which they did not deny their own feelings of respect (and even love) for the figure of the rabbi, for the synagogue, and for the special warmth of traditional Jewish life. The majority of those who came from Hasidic homes remained great admirers of Hasidism and expressed it, not only in their songs and dances and festivals, but, also, in the way they gathered and organized themselves around the figure of a secular *rebbe*. Even though they fought against many Jewish religious images and institutions, they persisted in identifying Judaism with the Eastern European variety, to the extent that any other version was, in their opinion (even if not consciously so), a misrepresentation or a poor copy.

This intricate composition of the Second Aliyah pioneers, their ambivalence towards traditional Judaism and their deep emotional attachment to Jewishness, their romantic attitudes, so full of different types

of faith, and their strong intellectual convictions were among the chief factors that structured life in the State of Israel.

Education was one of the most vital fields in which this was evident, even long before the establishment of the State. Naturally, teachers aspired to reproduce the image of the older generation and to make it, if anything, a more healthy and free one. It was hoped that the succeeding generation would have the same synthesis of "instinctive" Jewishness and the best of human and national values. Except that the education could not help but be rather one-sided, because a vital part of their aspirations were of an emotional and scarcely conscious nature. There was, indeed, a large increment of nationalism in their education, but it was confined mostly to the question of the relation to the land and the people of the Bible. In general, the Bible became the corner-stone of Jewish education, with emphasis on national history, language and folklore, and a deliberate minimalization of the religious aspects, especially those that touched upon keeping the *mizvot*. (An extreme instance occurred in the early '50s when an unsuccessful attempt was made among a certain minority to eliminate the Holy Name from current editions of the Bible.) Post-Biblical literature, especially the Oral Tradition (Talmud and the like) and anything else that rested on religious faith, like the esoteric tradition (*Kabbalah*), was almost unknown to the pupils. The Hebrew literature which was taught was primarily that of the *Haskalah*, much of which had an anti-religious and anti-Jewish ghetto bias. True, a certain place was granted to *Aggadah* literature and there was a positive relation to the Hasidic movement, but all this in rather romanticised fashion, disconnected from anything in contemporary life. The product, therefore, of this Israeli education was a person who, despite a measured knowledge of Bible and Zionism, was often totally ignorant of post-Biblical Judaism or of the religious contents of Jewish tradition. To the extent that a relation to the Diaspora existed, it was usually antagonistic, or even contemptuous (the adjective, *galuti*, still connotes shame and disgrace). Thus, when the news of the Holocaust first came to this country, it had a different effect on the youth than on the old-timers, and it took some time before the sense of identification could be felt. Many parents showed concern at this lack of strong connection with Jewish values and Jewish history in the Diaspora and, as a result, after considerable discussion in private and in public, several national conventions, and many official pronouncements, the Ministry of Education decided some years ago, to promote "Jewish" consciousness. Special study programs were set up as part of the curriculum in every school, but it was too late and too little to make any noticeable difference in the prevailing attitudes. Jews and Judaism outside of ancient times were remote, uninteresting and even something to be ashamed of, something that, at the end of a long and wretched history, had come to its humili-

ating last chapter in the Holocaust. Religion was considered part of the shameful past and, at one time, in the early '50s, this approach was given extreme expression by a small, though gifted, group of Israeli-born youth who called themselves "Canaanites" and who talked of the desirability of a complete severance with the Diaspora, both past and present, and of a return to the "common Canaanite past" of the "Semitic" entity. To be sure, this group did not last long, and its extremist views were not accepted by any significant part of the public, but some of its members continued to function in various public capacities and within responsible political frameworks. In a variety of guises, such as the League Against Religious Coercion, the group managed to sway a section of public opinion, officially against "religious coercion," but under the surface are deep-rooted seeds of the anti-religious and anti-Jewish ideology of the "Canaanites." There is considerable evidence indicating that the various mass media of the country have within them a numerous and influential group of people whose views are close to, or in sympathy with, the "Canaanite" approach, at least in several aspects.

Of course, a complete picture of the situation must include some description of the religious section of the country. The Orthodox communities of the Old Yishuv that existed before modern Zionism, could not cope politically with the Second or the Third Aliyah. As a result of organizational weakness, and, to a degree, also because of an inner need, or even deliberate ideological decision, there was an increasing tendency toward withdrawal into their own specific, tradition-bound world. The few religious *haluzim* who came to the country were unable to alter anything in the prevailing atmosphere and were looked upon unsympathetically, if not, at times, even antagonistically. This was especially true of those who did not belong to the Socialist camp, like the Kfar *Hasidim* immigrants. Also, the Fourth Aliyah immigrants who came mainly from Poland in the '30s, and many of whom were religious, could not, by themselves, contribute anything substantial by way of change. Moreover, the general spirit of the land was nationalist and secular, and many of the young people left the religious homes in which they had been brought up to join either one of the labor movement's settlements or one of the underground movements. (The underground of *Ezra* and *Lehi*, which were more nationalistic and less socialist, were more attractive to the religious youth, although when it came to their religious identity, there was, in the long run, little recognizable distinction between the different ways.) The Holocaust, which also destroyed the great reservoir of Orthodox Jewry in the Diaspora, seemed, for many, to be the end of a chapter—and the end of Jewish religion as a whole. It should be noted that many of the concessions that were given to the religious sector, on the establishment of the State (especially the law of religious marriage and the exemption of Yeshivah students from military

service), were not based as much on pressure or political coercion on the part of the religious sector as they were on the supposition (frequently expressed in those days) that the problem would, to all intents and purposes, solve itself in a matter of a decade or two, as the religious sector would diminish and lose its importance. From the very beginning, the Chief Rabbinate was not accepted by a considerable portion of the religious sector (the Old Yishuv, the Aggudat Yisrael, and the like), and even the ostensible leadership of these groups was ineffectual, so that there was practically no religious influence in the prevailing atmosphere of the country, nothing that had a moral weight. Even when, at the head of the religious sector, there was a person of stature, with a positive relation to the Zionist upbuilding, such as Rabbi Kook, no more influence was felt than in later periods. For the most part, the religious leadership in the country was on a rather low level.

The situation changed significantly after the establishment of the State. First there was a spiritual uplift: as the pre-State Zionist enthusiasm waned and the general, secular system of values lost its glamor (the Second World War made many people aware of the crisis of Western culture) the constant drain of religious youth to the outside ceased. From that time on, it may be said that the religious sector retained its numerical proportion in the country; if anything, it may have grown somewhat, due to its high rate of natural increase. The exemption of yeshivah youth from military service and the growing support which they received from abroad increased their numbers and was instrumental in forming a new stratum of people who had received a more extensive Jewish education, at a higher level and for a longer period—and contributed to the near cessation of the student “drain” to the outside.

Another factor was the religious background of the new immigration. Those who came, in part from Europe, especially Hungary and the surrounding area, and in vast numbers from Islamic countries of the Middle East, were mainly tradition-minded Jews who kept the *mizvot* and abided by the Torah. Thus, in the context of the political set-up of those years, with the various parties juggling for political status, many things were done that can only be termed “organized destruction.” Local government and authority were parcelled out to the parties on a proportional basis, with the “religious” receiving 25% of the new immigrants into their educational, cultural, political and administrative frameworks. Pressure was used to cut off the new immigrants, especially the children, from the religious tradition. These efforts succeeded to such an extent that many, if not most, of the immigrants from the North African and Middle Eastern countries abandoned either all or part of their own religious way of life. (This may well have prepared the ground for a serious social problem some twenty years later, which emerged when the succeeding generation became aware of the cultural, economic and social gap be-

tween the communities.) Nevertheless, the new immigration reinforced the religious sector in a very emphatic way. As a result, the concept of a clear-cut religious sector was fixed in the political and cultural awareness of the population. Although politically that sector elected only about 12% of the Knesset members, it has the general sympathies (if one can judge by the numbers of children in religious schools) of about three times that number.

Within this religious sector, there are two distinct and opposite trends, the existence of which serve to explain many of the features characteristic of Jewish religious life in Israel. On one hand, with the growth of the more conservative elements (of the Old Yishuv, Aggudat Yisrael, the yeshivah students) there has been a tendency to sever contact—in terms of ideas and in practice—with the State. This element consciously prefers to build religious “ghettos,” scattered throughout the country, and to strengthen the religious core—even if this means the loss of many on the fringes. The other element is more open to the outer world (Hapoel Hamizrahi, some of the graduates of the universities), and visualizes itself and the whole religious sector as an integral part of the life of the country, and even ascribes to this national life a certain religious value, which it also strives to make palpal.

The relations between the trends—towards inner withdrawal and towards outer involvement in the State—and between the bodies representing them, are not permanent and steady, and depend on a variety of external and internal factors. Thus, the increase in numbers of yeshivah students (including, to the surprise of the National Religious Party, also those yeshivah colleges supported by the Hapoel Hamizrahi wing) is among the factors leading towards inner withdrawal. On the other hand, long-standing political alliance with Mapai, the influence of the communications media, the time spent in military service—, all these weigh the balance in favor of involvement in the outer world. One of the decisive external factors is the attitude to religious questions on the part of the non-religious sector. Every time there is public tension around an issue that has some religious overtones, the tendency of the religious sector to withdrawal and retreat into isolation grows perceptibly. Whenever the relations between the two sectors are more relaxed and tranquil, the religious sector tends to become more open and accessible.

With the crystallization of a broad religious front in the '50s, the political and spiritual issues in connection with religion in Israel were brought into relief:

First, religious problems ceased to be general spiritual problems.

Second, the State, as such, ceased to be interested in religion, except when, and to the extent that, it was directly concerned, as in questions of legislation and *halakhah*.

Finally, the problems of Judaism became controversial political is-



sues, and their outcome depended on the alignment of the political forces involved.

It seems, therefore, as though the problems are moving in the direction of a sociological confrontation between "religious" and "secular" sectors and a religious problem does not exist any more in any other scope or significance.

Various factors have led to this situation in which Judaism and the religious sector of Israel have ceased to be the vital core of the nation. Most important, no doubt, is the education given to the children and the prevailing atmosphere of secularism. Concerning the latter, as described previously, the State got its spiritual orientation from people who considered themselves atheists. Therefore, there has been a general feeling in the country that matters of religious faith belong to the past and that enlightened and progressive people cannot be expected to put their belief in such "medieval superstitions," while those who do cling to the ancestral faith are considered backward and anachronistic, if not actually queer and strange. The problem, as such, is "non-existent," in principle—and there is no point in discussing it or contemplating it seriously. On the other hand, the education itself, with its very small doses of Jewish tradition, acted as another, perhaps more formidable barrier to genuine faith than the scornful total disregard for religion, for it made Jewishness something odd and different. As a result, religious feeling was not necessarily bound up with specifically Jewish forms or expressions, and it did not even bring one closer to the ranks of the "religious sector." Judaism was no longer the accepted way for any Jewish young person with religious inclinations; in fact, all the ways could be considered equally attractive. These facts, as they resulted from the prevailing atmosphere and education, were again extended to the mass communications media which, in turn, reinforced the estrangement from Judaism. And since problems have not been taken seriously, any public airing falls back to the political, legislative or party administrative level, and Judaism is made to appear a matter of personality clashes, political intrigue and election struggles. Consequently, the average man in the street has practically no idea whatsoever of a religious figure, whether in terms of creative activity, thought or literature, who does not belong to the political arena.

All of which only reinforces the estrangement of religious personalities and religious ideas from the average Israeli. Gradually, chances for intimate communion with Jewishness in words, concepts, images, is diminishing. Therefore, the phenomenon of repentance—the one who returns to the fold is a *baal teshuvah*—is not common, and involves all the problems of someone converting to a new faith.

The formation of "blocs" has, of course, also had an immediate effect on the religious adherents, either making them withdraw into social and spiritual works that have little or nothing to do with secular life and

people, or making them direct their energies into political activities, the aim of which is merely to strengthen their defensive position against attack from outside. A serious analysis of the political action of all the religious parties would indicate that, in spite of their being accused of exerting "religious coercion" (which, in fact, hardly exists), they are not concerned with matters that are valid for the State as a whole but with defending their own existence against the prevailing tendency to ignore their problems altogether. The laws of Sabbath and of marriage, or the regulations exempting yeshivah students from military service provide the "religious sector" with their only chance to retain some sort of contact with the rest of the population. But this very struggle restricts any deeper and broader possibilities of influence on the part of spiritual leaders, such as rabbis or heads of yeshivot. What is more, no attempt is made to exert any genuine spiritual influence on the State as a whole. There is not a single religious personality who carries any weight beyond the limited confines of his own very clearly defined public.

Similar obstacles face the efforts of religious groups, like the Reform or the Conservative congregations, brought primarily from the United States. Even though these groups, especially the Reform synagogues, have tried to make contact with a broader Israeli public, their influence is not marked. Mistakenly estimating that the negative attitude to religion could be attributed to certain harsh features of the halakhah or to the pressure of "religious coercion," they thought that by coming out against these aspects of religion they could overcome the obstacles raised by the Orthodox religious bloc. But, of course, as mentioned, these aspects were only political expressions of the absence of any ideological relation or real religious tension, and changing them would be of little avail. What is more, according to the approach of the "founding fathers," a genuine emotional relation to Jewishness could be realized only through those forms familiar to them from Eastern Europe, and anything else seemed counterfeit.

On the whole, then, the gap between the average Israeli and Judaism is the result of a certain outlook which continues to operate even though it no longer presumes to be a clear-cut ideology, and of an educational system which has had a very definite effect on the country even though it had no such clear-cut intention. The accumulation of forces is continuing to widen the gap between the Israeli and his religion and is creating an "Israeli nation" whose inherent ties with Judaism, past and present, will probably continue to decline and diminish. As against these forces, however, there are others. First, the state of constant warfare with neighboring countries has not only isolated Israel from the world, it has also necessarily brought about a national unity which becomes stronger with every threat and danger and because of which the obstacles and antagonisms of conflicting blocs are overcome. Moreover, the influence

of the founding fathers' orientation to Jewishness, in spite of its anti-religious bias, also contains a kind of idealization of certain aspects of Judaism and a real, heartfelt connection with them. Thus, one should distinguish between the "worship of the dead rabbi," with its deference to the sages of the past, irrespective of who they were, when they lived or what they stood for, and an equal incapacity to relate devotionally to a living sage. Part of the great respect now shown to the late Rabbi Kook may be ascribed to this attitude, which largely ignores the disputes and the enmity which so harried him in his lifetime. Another feature is the profound unwillingness of almost every sector of the population of Israel to cut its ties with Judaism. It is characteristic that even the sharpest criticism of religion or the halakhah (Shabbat, conversion or Personal Status) throws the guilt on the institution of the rabbinate and not on the principles of Judaism itself. Even when the persons leading such an anti-religious struggle are well aware that the issue is not a matter of the stand taken by certain rabbis or by the rabbinate itself, they do not dare to come out in open war against Judaism. At the same time, factors of this kind, which are bound up with certain emotional ties with Jewishness, become weaker with the growth of a new generation, further removed from national-traditional or folk-lore sources.

In a variety of ways, the Six Day War brought a certain change in this whole situation. The trauma of the weeks preceding it initiated a crisis in the Israeli's sense of isolation. Whereas before he had tended to feel "more Israeli than Jewish," and closer to other normal nations than to the Diaspora, he suddenly discovered that all the political friendships and alliances were quite worthless and that the only reliable partnership was with the Jews of the world. Even though this period was very short, it caused a change of attitude and identification, so that the relation to the Jewish people was no longer a matter of "Zionism," which was an unconvincing subject learned in school, but a very real and vital experience. Another post-war development was the growth of the movement for a greater Land of Israel (*Erez Yisrael Hashlemah*). This was the first movement that broke through, not only the party barriers but, also, the religious-secular barriers. Also, despite its strictly political-secular side, it also drew much from the historical Jewish past and, this time, not from the archeological aspect, but from the ideas and concepts of ancient times. The notion that the people of Israel have an essential right to the land is derived from the Bible view of the Covenant, with all that this entails. A number of writers and public figures from different backgrounds have begun to discover a Judaism that has meaning, not only for an irrelevant distant past, but for contemporary life.

Still another influence on religious life may be expected to come from outside the country, especially from recent intellectual trends in the Western world. Such trends are usually absorbed by Judaism rather

tardily, as one Israeli cynic put it—an academic quarter century late. Nevertheless, the general weakening of atheism as a solution to the problems of life, and the increasing interest in different religions for the sake of their spiritual message, are trends that have also reached Israel. Their effect on the intellectual life of the country seems to be a certain change in the attitude of rejection towards religion. And when the subject of theology, in its widest sense, will become a legitimate problem in Israel (for, until now, it has been “out of bounds”), then there is a good chance that the values of Judaism will also find their proper place.

The future of Israel, however, is still inscrutable. These are certain forces, both among the religious sector and among the secular bloc, that seek to sever all contact between the two. Such a severance can quickly become an unbridgeable gap. In addition, it should be kept in mind that the cultural essence of Judaism is such that it is extremely difficult to keep in touch with it superficially, by way of purely emotional “conversion,” so that the very inability to reach the shut gates of Jewish culture can become a very important factor in blocking the way for later generations who would want such a more complete involvement. With all this, there still exists in Israel a silent majority which sincerely wants a national unity to evolve, and which aspires to a cultural renaissance that will also be a total or partial return to the religious contents of Judaism. On account of the enormous importance nowadays given to political activity, and because of the way Israeli politics is structured, with its opportunist platforms devoid of broader vision, it can happen that certain political manoeuvres will weigh the balance one way or another, without anyone consciously intending it to happen. Various intellectual trends from abroad, immigration of one particular sort or another, or the appearance of spiritual leaders of stature, whether from among the religious or from other sectors, may also bring about a certain solution to the riddle of the spiritual identity of the State of Israel.

# *The State of Religion in Israel*

JOSEPH S. BENTWICH

*There is No Religion in Israel Today.* THIS sentence, written (and italicized) by Prof. Hugo Bergman in a letter to *PETAḤIM*, No. 2 (20) of March 1972, although perhaps exaggerated, contains more than a germ of truth.

There are many *datiyyim* in Israel; but the adjective, *dati*, although commonly translated “religious,” has acquired, in that country, a narrower connotation of “observant.” Prof. Yeshayahu Leibovitch once remarked: “If you want to know whether a man is *dati*, examine his butcher’s shop, not his moral behaviour.” A boy in a *dati* school may be expelled if caught riding a bicycle on the Sabbath, but not if caught cheating in an exam.

There are plenty of *mesoratiyyim* (traditional Jews), especially among the Oriental communities. Here, again, the test is external observance—though not so strict as among the *datiyyim*—rather than religious belief or moral behavior. And roughly one-half of the Jewish population in Israel are *hofshiyyim* (free)—i.e., indifferent to religion altogether. They spend their Sabbath touring the country, or bathing in the sea, or watching a football match. On the New Year of 5732, it was estimated that half a million Jews were touring the country—over 50,000 in Sinai alone! They may have a Seder, and they may go to a synagogue on Yom Kippur, but, even so, more from nostalgia or national reasons than from religious conviction.

In sum, few Jews in Israel are really “God-fearing.” And these are not all *datiyyim*; they may equally well be members of secular kibbuzim. And still fewer are those who have a truly religious philosophy, who really believe in God.

How has this come about? When Jews lived in a ghetto or a *shtetl*, in a kind of cyst as it were, walled in from the Gentile world, the traditional Jewish way of life, with its customs and beliefs, was apparently self-sufficient, and was, at all events, unquestioned. But with the Enlightenment and the Emancipation of the 19th century, the walls of the ghetto were breached, the cyst was dissolved. Jews began to take an active part in the social, political and cultural life of the Gentile State, in which they strove for equal citizenship, and their world-outlook came to be no longer religious but, more often, humanist or Marxist or plain materialistic. The impact of the modern world has led to a *crisis* in Jewish thought, not resolved to this day. (See, particularly, Mordecai Ka-

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plan's book, *The Greater Judaism in the Making*, in which he analyzes the various trends in modern Jewish thought—Reform, Neo-Orthodoxy, Conservative Judaism, Zionism—none of them, on his analysis, sufficient. Nor is his own solution, in the last chapter, more convincing.) The establishment of the State of Israel, at first regarded as the principal *aim* of Israeli Jews, is now recognized to be only a *means*. But a means to what? Even the kibbutz, with its idealism, has failed to develop a complete and coherent philosophy; Marxism is a “God that failed;” and the breach with tradition, although perhaps necessary in its day, has left a lacuna which has not been filled. In short, a modern and revived Judaism has yet to be created.

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Since the establishment of the State, has the state of religion in Israel improved, or is it getting worse?

Many people point to signs of improvement: full synagogues on Yom Kippur, soldiers in the Six-Day War weeping at the Western Wall, the groping for religion among young kibbutzniks (see their journal, *Shdemot*). On the other hand, the younger members of the Oriental communities—now numbering over one-half of their age-groups—although born and bred in “traditional” homes, are being rapidly “assimilated” to the dominant, free way of life. The division of the school system into State Schools and Religious State Schools has resulted in the State Schools—which teach two-thirds of the children—being, in effect, *non-religious*. The children learn Bible, but very little of rabbinic literature or of religious observances, which they associate with *galut*. Their parents may be “free,” but they grew up in the *heder*, and at least know something of traditional Judaism. The children are mostly plain *amei ha-arez* (ignorant).

In 1956, the Ministry of Education launched a slogan, “Jewish Consciousness,” and issued programs of “Jewish consciousness” for the State Schools (elementary only). But very little has been done to put these programs into effect. The teachers, if not anti-religious, are themselves mostly *amei ha-arez* and, though willing, perhaps, to impart “Jewish consciousness,” just do not know how to go about it, especially as most of them are “free” in their daily lives. “How can I teach children to respect Jewish observances which I myself do not observe?”

Nor do the gropings after religion among the more serious of the young people get much encouragement. The religious parties hold on to their apparent monopoly of religion. Judaism, as they see it, is monolithic—“either-or.” Either you are *dati*—i.e., observing all the 613 commandments as the will of God—or you are *hofshi*; there is no middle path. They are not particularly concerned with moral issues—e.g., removal of class-distinctions, or better human relations with the Arabs—but only with external observances. The image of the *dati* in the minds



of Israeli youth, or as portrayed in the newspapers, is that of a bearded Jew, dressed in black (most unsuitable for the climate), and throwing stones—on the Sabbath!—at cars being driven on that day. Even this might be understood if they were truly convinced that driving a car on the Sabbath is contrary to the will of God. But are they? Can anybody in the 20th century, after the crisis of the Enlightenment and the Emancipation, be certain that *all* of the 613 commandments represent the will of God, and that none of them is man-made?

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What is to be done?

The key, I suggest, is in *education*. The division of schools into “religious” and “non-religious” must be abolished. The division, formulated in the Law of State Education of 1953, was, even at that time, only a compromise, an improvement, indeed, on the previous system of “4 Trends,” and need not be regarded as sacrosanct, as a permanent solution. *All* Jewish schools should be “religious,” though not necessarily *dati*. There are certain principles of religion without which it is nonsense to speak of *Jewish education*. It is generally admitted that the establishment and maintenance of a State is not a sufficient aim. It must be a *Jewish State*. But what does the word “Jewish” connote? What is the minimum to which we are committed if we want the State to be truly Jewish?

I will suggest here three fundamental principles of Judaism, which I think most Israeli teachers will be prepared to accept.

1. *There is no Israel without the Bible, and the Bible has no meaning without a belief in God.*

Of course, one cannot prove the existence of God; religion is a matter of *faith*, not of proof. But its negation can, I think, be *disproved*. The philosophy of the Bible is more convincing, and a better guide to life, than all the modern substitutes, all the “isms,” for they are all *man-centered*, not truly *world-outlooks*. Their cosmology is that of modern science, which gives only a partial picture that the world is a mere collection of millions of particles in chance motion, subject only to physical laws, which are, themselves, statistical—i.e., laws of chance—and that all the wonders of Creation, and of its continuation in the history of man—e.g., the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven—is a product of chance, is inconceivable, or, even if conceived, cannot be a guide to life. In practice, nobody *lives* on such assumptions. We assign moral blame to others and to ourselves (Yom Kippur). “I ought not to have acted thus: I could, and should, have acted otherwise.” We argue with one another as to whether this or that action was right or wrong. That means that we assume that there are moral laws, just as there are physical laws, in

the constitution of the Universe; that I tell the truth or not, am kind to my neighbor or not, is not just a personal whim or a social convention, but matters (*ikhpat*) to the Universe as a whole. Nazism was *absolutely wrong*; and it was an absolute duty to fight it, even if it meant losing one's life in the cause.

## 2. *Israel was constituted from birth as a religious nation.*

The Covenant of Sinai was affirmed and repeatedly re-affirmed by the people—under Joshua, Elijah, Josiah, Ezra and Nehemiah, the Maccabees, and throughout Jewish history. Jewish nationality and religion have always been indissolubly linked. That does not mean that all Jews have been religious. On the contrary, in almost every period of Jewish history—that of the Bible, the Second Temple, the Middle Ages—many individuals, if not the majority, were “backsliders”—i.e., assimilated to Baal-worship, to Hellenism, to Christianity or Islam, or, in the modern world, to plain materialism. But if the Jewish people has survived, as a people, for over 3,000 years, it is only thanks to those who remained faithful to the Covenant, to the double loyalty to nation and religion combined.

It has been said that

Judaism is not what some or all individual Jews happen as a fact to be. It is what Jews should be doing (but often are not doing) *as members of a holy people*.<sup>1</sup>

But perhaps that was only in the past. Are we, too, committed to Judaism in this sense?

The reply is that the individual is not committed; he is free to live as he thinks fit. But if he wishes to live *as a Jew*, he is not entirely free. To be a member of the Jewish people entails, as a minimum, that *not everything is permissible*. As against the current permissiveness of the Western world, which sets up “happiness” as the aim in life, Judaism sets up certain *mizvot*. One can consider and discuss which *mizvot* are binding on Jews in the 20th century. Thus, the kibbutz has set up a new Jewish way of life, with a heavy burden of *mizvot*, different from those of tradition. But a Jewish people *without mizvot altogether* is inconceivable.

And this combination of nation and religion is needed more than ever in an otherwise disintegrating modern civilization. Religion is not a matter of belief only. The beliefs, to be genuine, must be *implemented* in daily life (*hagshamah*). That is possible only in a society whose members hold those beliefs; and full implementation, in the world as at present constituted, is possible only in a national State. Paul, when he said that the Law was no longer binding, drove a wedge between Judaism

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1. Leon Roth, *Judaism, A Portrait* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), p. 16.

and Christianity, which may have served to win Christian converts in an otherwise pagan society, but left Christianity emasculated to this day (separation of Church and State). It is perhaps no accident that many Christians, while bewailing the "Death of God" in their own community, regard with envy the comparative robustness of Judaism, which has always stressed action rather than belief.<sup>2</sup>

*3. Implementation of religion in daily life, social as well as private, requires a revival of the halakhah.*

That necessitates both re-interpretation and broadening of the existing *halakhah*, as handed down by the tradition from the Talmudic period and the Middle Ages. Re-interpretation, because social conditions have changed since the *halakhah* was first formulated. The *halakhah*, unlike other systems of Law—e.g., the English Common Law—has not been continuously revised (though it allows for revision), and so has become, in many parts, out of date. Broadening, because, in modern society, new issues and demands have arisen—e.g., the State—on which the *halakhah* gives practically no guidance whatever.

The acceptance of this principle will facilitate mutual understanding and co-operation between *datiyyim* and *hofshiyyim*. On the one hand, the *datiyyim* will realize that they have no monopoly on religion and that blind adherence to the traditional *halakhah* is not necessarily performing the will of God, but may even savour of idol-worship; and they will be willing to seek adaptation of the tradition to the new conditions of the modern world. This, on the other hand, should lead the *hofshiyyim* to a better understanding of the Jewish religion. Nor need teachers, if they are not fully observant themselves, be afraid to impart "Jewish consciousness," provided they are at least *mevakshei derekh* ("seekers of the path"), striving towards a revived Judaism, coherent with modern life and thought. And if the children can be "infected" with the same striving, it will be a great step towards Jewish consciousness.

The revival will not come all at once, and, in the first instance, almost certainly not by State legislation. Rather, one must envisage the formation at first of *havurot* (local groups), banding together to study and interpret Torah, to find out what in it is still valid, and to further its implementation in their daily lives.<sup>3</sup> Implementation (*hagshamah*) must include, not only prayers and observances, but practical steps of *tikkun* (improvement) of the individual and of society. "All Israel are responsible for one another" is a principle of universal application. Thus arose the Ḥasidic movement in the 18th century, and the kibbutz move-

2. See Fr. Edward Flannery, "Jesus, Israel and Christian Renewal," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Winter 1972.

3. A conference calling for the formation of such *havurot* was held at Nizanim Youth Village during *Sukkot* 5732.

ment in the 20th. "Simeon the Just . . . used to say: Upon three things the world is based: upon the Torah, upon worship, and upon the practice of charity" (*Ethics of the Fathers*, 1:2). To this three-fold foundation, if broadly understood and interpreted—thus, "worship" may include meditation, and "charity" may include both private and public measures for the abolition of poverty and inequality—I think almost all Jews in Israel will give their assent.

A Gentile observer, studying Israeli society, with all of its class and ethnic differences, with the wide spectrum of religious and political outlook, asks himself what are the forces which, nevertheless, consciously or unconsciously, hold the people together, and he enumerates four: a) Belongingness; b) History and Destiny; 3) Mission; d) (with typically English understatement) The Other Dimension.<sup>4</sup> On these three principles, I believe that a unified Jewish education can be based. But it will take a long time.

First of all, the teachers must be trained (with all new syllabuses, just as in the Sciences). I envisage the establishment of a Centre for Jewish Studies, to which groups of selected teachers—*datiyyim* and *hofshiyyim* together—would be sent, during the school year, for monthly courses. In this way, it should be possible to train from 50 to 100 teachers per annum. These will act as a leaven in their own schools. In the course of 10–15 years, perhaps all secondary schools (including Junior High Schools) could be gradually "infected." Then—though not before—the change might be given legal recognition by revision of the Law of State education of 1953.

In this reform, I believe that American Jewry could play an important part. In general, Jewish education must be seen as comprising the Diaspora as well as Israel, for the fundamental principles of Judaism are common to all. Jewish Education in the Diaspora must be based on a full day-school up to the age of 18, for only in this way can a serious knowledge of Hebrew and Hebrew literature be interpreted. The present system of part-time afternoon schools, mainly elementary only, presents Jewish knowledge as something childish. (At the time of Bar Mizvah, the boy—not his father—says "Blessed is He who has freed me," and goes into life an *am ha-arez*. The day-school should be supplemented by summer camps and capped by at least one year of work and study in Israel. Then, and only then, can we expect that the children will remain *Jews*, proud of their heritage, even if they do not settle in Israel.

This system will require, for its full implementation, a two-way traffic of Israeli teachers, engaged for 2–3 years in Jewish schools in the Diaspora, and of teachers from the Diaspora, perhaps replacing them, in Israel. Diaspora teachers might well be included, also, in the groups studying at the Centre for Jewish Studies. For we are one people.

4. Samuel Clement Leslie, *The Rift in Israel* (London: Routledge, 1941), chap. 13.

# *The Jewish Way of War*

ELIEZER LIVNEH

THE TRADITIONAL JEWISH OUTLOOK, WHICH IS so realistic in its awareness that the world wags on—took it for granted that the return to the land of Israel would be tied to its conquest. The earlier visionaries of *Hibat Zion* who drew from the original sources, like R. Zvi Hirsh Kalisher and Akiva Joseph Shlesinger, assumed the necessity of a Jewish defence force in combat with the local Arabs. The shapers of modern Zionism, at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, were influenced by Western materialist states of mind, and maintained that there was no likelihood of a Jewish-Arab conflict, since the Jews returning to their land would bring economic advantage and social improvement to the Arabs. The divergence in these two approaches—which were not absolute opposites—did not become an internal Jewish split; the Arabs chose the alternative. To the return of Jews they reacted with violence. This reaction had the aspect of organized terrorism as long as the Arabs did not have states of their own, and reached a climax in the 1936-1939 riots, when hundreds of terrorists from various Arab countries, under the leadership of Fawzi Kaukji, burst into Mandated Palestine. It became conventional war after the establishment of Arab states in the surrounding area (1948, 1956, 1967). After the Six-Day War, it reverted to murderous terrorism, when the Arab governments became convinced that they could not defeat Israel by regular military means.

The Arab opposition of the many against the few made a major contribution to the sense of urgency in the Return, as well as to the strengthening of character of those who did come back. The modern Israeli fighter would not have developed were it not for the everpresent feeling that war with the Arabs *compels* a concentration of spiritual strength in the military plain. And one does not achieve military efficiency as a national characteristic by technical know-how and professional expertise alone; rather, it is necessary to draw upon the treasure-trove of inner resources of the people: personal discipline and peace, mutual attentiveness and imperative fidelity, a stringency in recognizing the facts and a flexibility in performance, combined with self-sacrifice and humaneness toward the enemy (as Arab hatred for Israel grew, there was a decrease of Israeli hatred toward the Arabs). It was as though the Arab leaders had come to verify the words of Scripture in modern times—“Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to test Israel by them . . .

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This article was translated from the Hebrew by RUTH B. WAXMAN.

that the generations of the people of Israel might know war . . . such at least as had not known it before" (Judges 3:1-2).

The Six-Day War was a *Jewish* war in a spiritual sense, more so than any other war in Jewish history. Bound up in it—and resounding within it—was a historic experiment of thousands of years, both in the homeland and in the Diaspora. It was not a direct continuation of the wars of the Israelites of old when they had been a nation in their own land; the power of *kiddush ha-shem* in the communities of the Diaspora added a special strength.

What occurred in those six days on the various fronts—on land, in the air and on the water—was a concentrated and intense expression of what went on in the hearts of the Nation. It is impossible to explain the accomplishments of *Zahal* merely in military concepts. In the experience of its soldiers throbbed the heart-beat of many generations: the first conquerors of the land and the Maccabean warriors; the defenders of Massadah and the men of Mayence who preferred suicide to baptism; the ghetto fighters and the millions burnt in the crematoria of the Holocaust; there was blended within them the clarity of mind of the sages from Sura to Wolozin, the piety of the Hasidim and the selflessness of the seekers for rational truth, as well as of believers in the Zionist pioneering imperative. "King David, the sweet singer of Israel," was their general—the six days were saturated with song and melody—and Jerusalem of Gold floated in front of their inward eye. Past and present were united, one with the other, and when they melded in the crucible of a war of duty, *milhemet mizvah*, the whole was ignited in a high tension explosion and was forced into a multiple strength: military in its actions, spiritual in its essence.

Some time after the Six Days, I found myself with the officer in charge of an armored unit in one of the bases in Sinai. I asked him what, in his opinion, were the factors that had brought about the speedy and decisive victory. He replied: "Much was due to confidence, much to esprit de corps; much was due to the awareness that they were fighting for the lives of their families and for the life of the nation." He paused, momentarily, and added: "The Egyptians maintain that we outnumbered them, and in a certain sense they were right; the Six Million marched along with us. . . ." And what did he feel at the moment when the initial command for attack was given? "The anticipation was long and intense," he replied, "and not only in the three weeks that we waited in the camps; all the generations of Israel were compressed into our anticipation. At the moment when I gave the command, I felt a lifting of my spirit (little did he realize that he was speaking in the language of the Psalms) and there was no doubt about the consequences. In essence," he added, "even for the Egyptians there was no doubt. There seemed to be a kind of secret communication between us."



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The Israeli victory in the Six-Day War was decisive. Its image brightened and grew, intensified and grew, with the passing of the years, as distinguished from many other victories in the histories of nations and of wars. But the Six-Day War did not beget a euphoria of victory. This aspect has had the least stress put on it. The word "victor," *menazeah*, is used in the Bible as a term of modesty in the presence of God, *menazeah al shir mizmor*. But the spiritual consequences of the war continued to deepen, continued to ramify, as the event became more distant in time. The spiritual effect of the Six-Day War is different from that of the War of Liberation in 1948, greater than that, and, in some sense, contrary to it. The War of Independence established a state, stabilized a national security and engendered the feeling that Jews had become a "normal" people; after all, the absence of a state—so some said—was what had distinguished them from the rest of the nations. The Holocaust, close though it was to 1948, had disappeared in a kind of spiritual amnesia, like a nightmare with no reality, at the moment of the state's establishment. The Six-Day War returned the Jews in Israel to an awareness of the Jewish promise and fate.

First of all, there was a unification of the nation and its homeland. In 1948, the state was located outside the heart of Erez Yisrael, in the outskirts of the land. Now, the nation returned to Judea and Samaria, to the original Jerusalem and to Sinai. At the liberated Western Wall, both the "religious" and the "secular" wept simultaneously in *identical* feelings of thanks and faith. The effect of the Wall became deeper with time and continued to encompass additional layers of the people—Hasidim in their daily prayers and parachutists in their swearing-in ceremony; native-born Israelis and *olim* from Russia, the old and the young. The encounter with Sinai, the origin of the nation's spiritual birth, became an ever-growing reality that was saturated with thrilling emotion. After all, we had already been there once before. . . . The peninsula is covered with hikers, scientists and artists, revealers of antiquities and nature students. Settlements within it, from the shores of the Mediterranean to the north and the Red Sea to the south, are drawing veterans and novices. The Gulf of Solomon has inspired more poetry and song than any place else in the country, with the exception of Jerusalem. The Golan Heights fascinated new pioneers even before it occurred to the government to establish settlements there, and its plateaus revealed to the settlers, the visitors and the researchers the strength of Jewish law and learning that had flowered there in the days of the Mishnah and the Midrashim. With accelerated awareness, Judea and Samaria revealed the significance of each and every place: Gibeon—where the sun stood still and "the youths played at dangerous games;" Shiloh—where the Holy Ark rested for hundreds of years; Jericho—that most ancient of cities and the

first one to be conquered; the Ai—that testing place of military puritanism in whose shadow General Akhan ben Karmi was condemned to death on four counts for unlawful plunder; the villages clinging to the hillside mounting up to Jerusalem, where the Maccabees fought for the Jewish way of life and kindled its lights; Hebron—where Abraham made the covenant with the land; the hamlets in the upper Judean south, where the memories of David, son of Jesse, are in every hill and vale, and where there are strewn remnants of the synagogues from the days of Roman and Byzantine rule. Every place and its symbolism, every locale and its expression, every inch of soil and its spiritual manifestation, have filled the soul with their echoes. The intensity of the reaction surpassed whatever had happened in the plains eighteen years ago. Is there any doubt that Jerusalem is more Erez Yisrael than is Haifa, or Hebron more than Acre? Here the mutual attachment of the people and the land was felt as absolute, and the demographic reality of the passing times as marginal and transient. At the moment of liberation of eastern Jerusalem, the Arabs (and other non-Jews) constituted 100% of the population; but does that city belong, therefore, less to Israel, or Israel less to it? The areas which were liberated in the Six-Day War are sometimes designated as “occupied;” more than Israel occupies them, they occupy Israel.

Not only was there a merging of the people with its ancestral places, but the country was once more regarded as a whole, whose parts complement each other, and achieve their wholeness one from the other; the Jordan Valley and the snowy peaks of Mt. Hermon which nourish the valleys with their waters; the tradition-saturated hills of Judea and Samaria and the widespread multicolored deserts of Sinai which abound with security. “The Land of Israel,” wrote Rabbi Kook, “is not an external matter, a property external to the nation, simply a means to an end, the maintenance of the nation’s physical and even spiritual existence . . . following the separation from the secret sources of being, there has ensued a blurred awareness of the sanctity of Erez Yisrael . . . we are not negating every and any kind of conception and understanding which is based on integrity, feeling, wisdom and a fear of heaven in any form whatsoever, except that this method would tend to negate the mysteries and their great influence on the national spirit, for this is a calamity against which we must fight with wisdom and understanding, with holiness and strength” (*Orot*, Jerusalem 1950, pp.9-10). At the time when these words were written, at the beginning of the 20th century, they seemed unclear to most readers. Today, even those who express the concepts of Rabbi Kook differently know just what he meant. The matters are not political, but a policy which is not anchored in them floats aimlessly in empty or alien space.

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The Six-Day War is a way-station in a violent encounter of many

generations, between the returnees to Zion and the Arabs, who see Israel as part of their world. In this war, and in the military occurrences afterwards, the Jewish way-of-war rose to its full expression. It has not been made clear whether this is the last stage in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and circumstances compelled a self-appraisal: what is the mutual relationship between Israel and warfare? What is the influence of war and the military on Israeli society and vice versa? As in the days of the return from Babylonian exile, there emerged once again the need for the re-establishment of the land and the protection of the people—"With one hand did he work and in the other he held a weapon." And it demanded a spiritual rejoinder: What is the nature of Jewish arms? What is their uniqueness? War and all violent contact between nations express the character of a people and add to its crystallization. Rabbi Kook drafted the statement thus: "Wars deepen the special value of each nation, until its form is projected and becomes realized, in all its depths." (*Orot*, p. 15).

The attitude of the Jewish fighters toward war was expressed at the end of the Six-Day War—satisfaction at the victory combined with distress at the killing and for the very act of bloodshed. The war and the victory were a decisive moral responsibility—the only alternative was another holocaust—nonetheless, the process of the fighting left sadness and grief in the souls of the fighters; the anguish of the enemy was reflected in the soul of the Jewish soldier, whether he returned to civilian life, remained in *Zahal* or volunteered again. The attitudes were expressed in thousands of broadcasts, lectures and statements. Some of them were collected into anthologies (like *The Seventh Day*). More important than the various literary expressions were the experiences which became part of the spirit of the general population as time went on. The war did not generate enmity towards the Arabs. The acts of terrorist murder against the Jews, which did not distinguish between men and women, or children from adults, *intensified* self-control and restraint, and this quality was revealed as a *national* characteristic, welling from within. It is possible to regard *The Seventh Day* and similar works as literary creations or as intensely emotional reactions of groups of young people. But the general behavior of the Jewish public in Jerusalem at the moment when the bombs burst in the Maḥneh Yehudah market (and took the lives of thirteen men and women, young and old) or the public behavior in Tel Aviv after the murderous explosion in the central bus terminal, are typical phenomena and a national quality. In these occurrences, and in tens of similar ones, there was not one single Arab killed as a result of an outburst of rage and revenge, even though there were many Arabs in the vicinity. A few Arabs who had been attacked by embittered Jews were removed from the hands of their attackers by other Jews, even before the police arrived to take control. The day after the slaughter of twelve children in the Avivim bus, the beach at Nahariah, near Avivim, was

thick with Arabs. It did not occur to anybody to harm them, and they felt secure; they knew the nature of the Jews. After the slaughter of the Israeli athletes at the Olympics in Munich, not one single Arab of all those who worked in, sauntered through, or visited any of the cities or towns of Israel, was harmed.

In the Jewish war there was a complete separation between the duty to do battle and the hatred of the enemy. Hatred was recognized as a weakness and a spiritual danger; as long as hatred is absent, the fighter's aim is directed solely at one goal—the effectiveness of his action. The commander of an armored battalion explained, “When you hit an Egyptian tank with a shell right on target, you get a certain satisfaction, not because a number of Egyptians are dead, but because you have given expression to your duty, to all the training that has been invested in you” (*Maariv*, Oct. 30, 1970). Another young battalion commander said, “The greatness of *Zahal* is, perhaps, that it does not teach a hatred of the enemy” (*Maariv*, Aug. 6, 1971). A *milḥemet mizvah* is in the category of an unquestioned obligation, not an action which looks for reward: “Be of good courage and let us play the man for our people and for the cities of our God, and may the Lord do what seems good in *His eyes*” (II Samuel 10:12).

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How has this ongoing warfare and the centrality of *Zahal* influenced Israeli society? What have they contributed to the crystallization of the individual character and to the nature of society? Or have they detracted from it? An old non-Jewish adage has it that “In times of war the muses are silent.” A Jewish midrash says, on the contrary, that “The sword and the book came down simultaneously from heaven.” The book and the muses may not be synonymous, but there is a complete anti-thesis in the attitudes which are stressed in those two sayings. Perhaps they were speaking of different kinds of warfare? The Six-Day War was characterized by an outburst of melody, song and poetry, which accompanied *Zahal* on all fronts and flanks. “A singing and striking army” foreign writers called it. And the song was not military song; the encounter with the beauties of the Israeli landscape and the recollections of the re-emerging past, the intensity of friendship, love and sensitivity were its topics. There was a renewal of the tradition of “Song and praise” (II Chronicles 20:22) in the war of the few against the many. “And when the minstrel played” (II Kings 3:15), the warfare of Israel and Judah was validated. The period of tension after the Six Days—the “war of attrition” and the anti-terrorists campaigns—is replete with an upsurge in literature, philosophy and science which are unparalleled in the history of modern Israel, and are immeasurably more intense than in the relatively quieter period before the War. Formal education, particularly on the higher levels, and scientific research, expanded and multiplied at

a rapid rate, beyond any comparison with prior years. The constructive tension which had absorbed within it the atmosphere of a *milḥemet mizvah* spurred everybody on.

Protracted service in *Zahal*, of both young recruits and of veterans—which hundreds of thousands of men and women experience for lengthy periods—what has it contributed to the character of the Yishuv? Everybody agrees that it has not made for increased brutality and indifference. On the contrary, it has aroused positive and strengthening habits; forbearance and patience, attentiveness and awareness, companionship and a spiritual openness; friendships which have crossed class and educational lines; an understanding of anguish (including the anguish of the enemy) and the cherishing of human life. All this does not diminish the military accomplishments, but enhances them. A parachute commander says, “We fight for the right to life of the Jewish people, in order to save the blood of our soldiers and to rescue the life of the individual. This feeling begets an abnormal strength . . . look at them all . . . the machinists and the technicians, the officers, the staff, the cooks and the barbers . . . look at the efforts which they invest. . . . When I enter the dining hall I feel an atmosphere of love, in the manner of food preparation, in their glances, in their openness” (*Maariv*, July 17, 1970). And this good atmosphere reaches the homes where “the greatest wisdom is to smile when you get there. Such a relaxing smile is worth a thousand words” (*Ibid.*).

The cultivation of moral and aesthetic qualities as a path to military superiority is ancient lore in Israel—hence the ability of the few to overcome the many. Not only is the “fearful and the faint-hearted” one warned against going to war, even the one who is afraid of the sins that might come to hand is exempt (*Sotah* 8:5). According to the Mishnah, a High Priest who has married a widow or a priest who has married a divorcee, are exempt from voluntary service lest their sins make them unsuitable to the challenges of war. Modern Israel has given pragmatic reality to traditional principles.

The younger generation is sensitive to the changes in the Western moral atmosphere. Israeli youth is open to the winds which blow from the outside—libertinism, commercial pornography, pop-art—but the influence of the *milḥemet mizvah* weakens them all. In an interview with eighth-graders, the moderator asked: “We are at war some twenty years; ultimately, a continuous war. The question, then, is, as it is in other countries, of eat, drink and be merry for the future is not clear. Doesn’t that arouse in you thoughts about giving vent to your own emotions, even before you are mature?” The boys and girls replied, “In connection with war they say that when cannons roar the muses are silent; with us, we don’t see that the muses are silent; the situation here is not a conventional war. . . . This is not a situation which should be designated as eat, drink,

for tomorrow we die. . . . We think that here life has a slightly different discipline, we value it more, we react toward it slightly in awe. Just because of that we feel that sexual proximity requires more sensibility and deeper emotion. Up to the age of 18 a young person studies; after that he is dedicated to the state for three years. It is possible to say with assurance that that does not break the bounds of morality and of pace which we set ourselves. . . . In my opinion, there are certain special advantages in our people, including the youth. Don't forget, we are always in a state of war, so that there is almost no alternative which we recognize" (*Ha-arez*, July 4, 1969). In the impression of a young writer, Aryeh Lifshitz (*A Bent Bridge*), a soldier, returned to duty in the Golan Heights after a leave in his kibbutz, says, "Something has changed . . . I was at home and it seemed to me that something was different. The people smile when they converse. The fields and the sea are radiant. When the children were taken outside for play they moved on the grass like creations of beauty . . . the very taste of the tomato on my plate was novel . . . and I see the wheat and the fullness of its ears, the clover and the flax have a special flavor, a new feeling is expanding" (*Far from Today and Near* [Masada, 1971]).

In Western thought, one assumes that a protracted war, which establishes as primary the need for security and the centrality of the army, injures the democratic fibre of the state, the freedom of the individual, the division of authority, and the effectiveness of law and the legal process. "*Inter arma silent leges*," said Cicero. A society at war and liberal democracy—they say—are antithetical or, at least, partially so. We will not concern ourselves here with the extent to which that is true about the West, but it has no validity in the Israeli life patterns. In the years of tension after the Six-Day War, Israeli democracy achieved broadening concepts: individual rights were expanded, Journalism increased its influence and its pressure power; radio and TV ceased to be government agencies and became public corporations (which often differed with the government); the office of Ombudsman was established, to include Zahal; the judicial arm, in its decisions, emphasized its independence of the government, over-ruled some of its directives and compelled their change; freedom of speech, including the speech of anti-Israeli Arabs and party-line Communists, increased to a higher level than ever before (though often at the cost of lowering its quality). The conviction grew that the anticipated antithesis between war and freedom just was not valid in Israel. Jewish warfare, it became evident, is a unique phenomenon, *sui generis*; and certainly there was a difference in its social projections. A non-Israeli Jew put it neatly, "I am not a religious man, but I believe that a miracle happened here"—thus Lord Goodman summarized the impressions of his visit to the country—"and the miracle is that this wonderful society was created, not in times of peace and quiet, but in



times of danger, death and the constant worry about war" (*Haarev*, May 3, 1968).

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The spiritual and mental achievements here described, like all human deeds, are not immutable. In Israeli society they exist in connection with Zionist trends and as long as they are dominant. Factors which serve to rally Western societies do not have the same meaning in Israel. What are these Zionist trends?

1—Aliyah and society's adaptation to its requirements.

2—Pioneering spirit among the newcomers and among the younger people of the Yishuv.

3—Settlement in all neglected areas of the land which are under Israeli control.

4—Protection of the Land of Israel and of the Dispersion of Israel throughout the world.

5—Forging the chains of tradition and the overcoming of debilitating Western influences.

These processes are a kind of syndrome, dependent on each other. To the extent that libertarian and permissive influences from the West become stronger, the achievements of Israeli society are weakened, its purpose is beclouded, and its military capacity is diminished. The six years since the Six-Day War are like a struggle, overt and concealed, between inward challenge and the infiltration of foreign trends. The outcome of this conflict may be fateful.

The war is a burden and a source of anguish which accompanies the ingathering of the exiles, the price which Israel pays for its right to peace ("peace is when the arm of the nations does not prevail in strength over Israel"—*Rashi*). This price cannot be compared with the overwhelming one which the Jewish people pays now for its purposeless existence in the Diaspora. In its homeland its sacrifices are meaningful. War, as a spiritual and sociological phenomenon, has a different meaning in Israel. It does not have the characteristic antinomies of the Western world, the categorizations and evaluations which are conventional about it there, and which change from time to time. Jewish tradition is lacking in a love of warfare as a means of expansion or as a show of strength. The Oral Tradition has set up many deterrents against warfare, which is called *milhemet reshut*—profane, political war. The consent of the great Sanhedrin was necessary to declare one, and many categories of individuals were exempt from it. The *Ramban* (Nahmanides), who was eager for the return to Zion, added further limitations and stringencies to *milhemet reshut*. But there is a war in which holiness is an integral element, the war for the existence and protection of the land of Israel. Then everyone



is liable—even the bridegroom from his chamber and the bride from under the canopy.

There are two kinds of armed activity. War, in and of itself, is not an obligation, just as political peace is not an ultimate value. Isaiah declares, "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks;" but Joel, the prophet of the return from the Exile, says, "Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears," and the two complement each other. Militarism and pacifism are alien to the Jewish spirit; "there is a time for war and a time for peace," and the times are not dependent solely upon human choice; each "time" has its own responsibilities. The essence is how to behave under the yoke of circumstances that are constantly changing. What are the moral imperatives, in each situation—the kinds of preparedness, the extent of self-control, the sensitivity of emotion and the virtues of purity which devolve upon the individual as well as upon the group. *Thereby* is Israel tested. In time of war there must be peace in the innermost soul, and in time of peace—strength; and in every circumstance it is necessary to be watchful for deceit and delusions. It is not the burdens of war or the ease of peace which are the dangers, but falsehood. "Lord, deliver my soul from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue . . . woe is me . . . that I dwell among the tents of Kedar. Too long has my soul dwelt among those who hate peace. I am for peace, but when I speak they are for war!" (Psalm 120).

The words are ancient, but the reality is ever-present.

# *The Youth: Jews, Israelis, or Both?*

SIMON N. HERMAN

ASSESSMENTS OF THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF the Jewishness of Israeli youth vary widely. They are seldom the result of systematic investigation; they do not set forth any clear set of criteria as to what constitutes "Jewishness," nor do they indicate what yardstick they use for measuring the intensity of a Jewish identity. When the observer comes from outside Israel, such criteria as are implicit in his evaluation are often taken over from the culture of which he himself is a product.

In a series of studies conducted at the Hebrew University on visiting American students in Israel, we found that most of them regarded the Israelis as less Jewish than they would wish them to be—and less Jewish than they actually are. The students were not sufficiently cognizant of the fact that the expressions of Jewishness in a majority Jewish society do not necessarily conform to the conception of what being Jewish is to a student socialized in America. There are obvious differences between the situation in Israel and that in Jewish communities in the Diaspora, which, unless taken into account, lead to misperceptions of the kind which we found among the American students.

## *The Different Expressions of Jewishness*

(a) "Being Jewish" in America is something specific and delimited. The American Jew is an American in most regions of his life space; on certain occasions he acts as a Jew. In Israel, on the other hand, "being Jewish" and "being Israeli" overlap; no clear lines of demarcation are drawn between the two. While "being Jewish" is less conspicuously specific than it is in the United States, this does not mean that it is less meaningful. In fact, it may be more so; it is pervasive, entering into wider areas of the life space.

(b) Jewish minorities in the Diaspora are in constant juxtaposition with the non-Jewish majority, from whom they see themselves marked off and of whose presence they are ever conscious. This situation heightens the salience, or awareness, of their Jewishness—for the marginal Jew no less than for him who identifies strongly. In Israel, the salience may be lower on this score, but the valence, or attractiveness, of a person's Jewishness is not necessarily weaker.

(c) In the Diaspora, a Jew demonstrates his Jewishness by being different from those around him; in Israel, he is Jewish by being like the

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others. The need for an act of identification does not exist to the same degree.

(d) The American students attribute an important role to religion (as they know it) in Jewish identity. They regard the Israelis as less religious than they would wish them to be—and, accordingly, less Jewish. Even the non-religious Americans would wish to see Israelis more religious. In point of fact, the students underestimate the extent of religious observance in Israel. When asked the percentage of *datiyyim*, or religiously observant Jews, in Israel, the mean response was ten percent, whereas it is more than thirty percent. They also are not aware of the heterogeneity of the religious sector. There is a tendency to identify the *datiyyim* with the throwers of stones at the passing traffic on the Sabbath, or with those attacking pathologists. The fact of the matter is that the extremists constitute only a small fraction of the religiously observant sector of the community.

### *Two Facets of Jewishness*

What, then, can be said about the Jewishness of Israel's youth? We shall here limit ourselves to two facets of their Jewishness—their relationship to the Jewish people and to the Jewish Diaspora past.

If Jewishness were merely a question of Jewish knowledge, the answer to our enquiry would be relatively simple. The fact is that Israel's schools impart to their pupils a body of knowledge—more particularly in the field of *Tanakh* and Jewish history—equalled by only a tiny fraction of the youth in the Diaspora. So, on a test of knowledge, they would score comparatively well, although even in this area—as we shall have occasion to observe—much needs to be done to equip Israeli youth with a fuller understanding of recent Jewish history and of the contemporary Jewish situation. The problem is one of attitudes. Although there is a relation between knowledge and attitudes, the possession of the requisite body of knowledge does not always, in itself, ensure the desired attitudes.

In order to determine the attitudes of Israeli youth, we began, in 1965, a systematic study of a representative sample of all the 16-17 year-olds in the high schools of Israel.<sup>1</sup> These were students who had been born in the year after the State was established, the first generation to be born "Israelis." (In addition to studying the high school students we explored the attitudes of their parents and teachers.) Our study was in its final stages in 1967 at the time of the Six Day War. It became clear that

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1. The research was carried out in the Institute of Contemporary Jewry and the department of psychology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, under a grant from the Israel Office of the American Jewish Committee. The conceptual framework developed for the study of Jewish identity and the empirical findings are reported in detail in S. N. Herman, *Israelis and Jews: The Continuity of an Identity*, (Random House, 1971).

that war, which reactivated the memory of the Holocaust, had a profound impact on the Jewish identity of Israelis, and we accordingly decided that our study should seek to explore the changes which had occurred. The original subjects of our research were in Israel's Defence Forces, and unavailable for restudy, so we turned to the students who, in 1968, were in the high schools in Jerusalem and Haifa.

### *Alignment with other Jews*

The great majority of young Israelis do not see themselves—as some observers have supposed—as a new people; they regard themselves as part and parcel of the Jewish people and as continuing the Jewish historical tradition. They see themselves aligned with Jews everywhere.

What is the basis of this alignment? The majority do not find much similarity between themselves and Jews elsewhere. (Indeed, the American students visiting Israel, too, were aware of many dissimilarities.) But, at the same time, the overwhelming majority recognize the interdependence that exists, that what happens to Jews anywhere, *qua* Jews, has implications for Jews everywhere. And this feeling of interdependence is accompanied by a sense of mutual responsibility.

Alignment with an ethnic group is not merely alignment at a given moment in time, but across time—with the past and future, as well as the present, of a group. In this respect, Israeli youth face a peculiar psychological problem. They have grown up independent and self-reliant in their own sovereign state, but their Jewish past is, to a considerable extent, the annals of a dependent Jewish minority in the Diaspora. They have no difficulty in relating themselves to the warriors led by Bar Kokhba at the fortress of Massada or, even much further back, to the Jews of the earliest Biblical times living in their own land. But there is an understandable problem in identifying with the long period of Jewish minority existence so different from the conditions of their own life.

The way they feel about the different periods in the past is generally determined by two criteria which reflect the tenor of their own lives: the first, the extent to which the period is one of Jewish activism and not of passivity; second, the extent to which it is characterized by efforts at the preservation of identity and opposition to its surrender.

### *The Memory of the Holocaust*

We saw in the attitudes towards the period of the Holocaust the touchstone of their relationship towards the past. At the time of the Eichmann trial, there had been expressions of perplexity on the part of some young Israelis that the Jews in Europe should have gone meekly to their doom like “sheep to the slaughter”—for so it seemed to these Israelis

viewing the past from their particular vantage point. What did they have in common, they asked themselves, with Jews of that kind?

In the years following the trial, increasing emphasis has been placed by educators on the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt and on other instances of active resistance. Such acts Israeli youth readily admire. But this represents only a partial approach to the period of the Holocaust. What of the relationship to Jews who showed only passive resistance, or who did not—often could not—resist at all? To what extent do they identify with them for what they were, and as they were? A further question which seemed to us crucial was—do Israeli youth see themselves as if they are survivors of the Holocaust, a surviving remnant of the Jewish people vested with the obligation to ensure its future?

Our study shows that a majority of young Israelis do see themselves as if they are survivors of the Holocaust and, as such, charged with a special responsibility for the Jewish future. This is true of the majority, not of all. The proper presentation of the Holocaust and its implications for contemporary Jewish life remains of the utmost importance in the education of Israeli youth, as well as in Jewish education elsewhere.

### *Jewishness and Israeliness*

A Jewish sub-identity exists nowhere in isolation. It is everywhere linked with another ethnic subidentity with which it interacts and by which it is influenced. And so, the Jewishness of the Israeli can be properly comprehended only when viewed in the context of its association with his Israeliness, just as the Jewishness of an American Jew can be understood only in the light of its interaction with his Americanism.

Critics of the Jewishness of the young Israelis have maintained that many of them see themselves first and foremost as Israelis and relegate their Jewishness to a secondary position. This holds true for a number of Israelis, just as there are others who see themselves primarily as Jews; some of them, indeed, regard their Israeliness as just an extension of their Jewishness. But the relative emphasis which they put on their Jewishness or their Israeliness is not what is of most importance, and the critics often draw unwarranted conclusions from the replies they receive. What is far more crucial is whether the Israelis recognize the inter-relatedness of their Jewishness and their Israeliness.

### *The Hard Jewish Core*

In view of the obvious importance of the religious variable in determining a Jewish identity, a comparison was made throughout our study between the *datiyyim*<sup>2</sup> (Orthodoxly observant), *mesoratiyyim* (tra-

2. The subjects were *datiyyim* attending schools within the orbit of the Ministry of Education. Our study did not include pupils from the relatively small, ultra-Orthodox sector who do not attend government schools.

ditionalists) and *lo datiyyim* (non-observant). It should be noted that in the Israeli context the terms relate to degrees of religious *observance*. *Dati* implies a strict observance of the *mizvot*; *mesorati* indicates a positive orientation to Jewish tradition accompanied by varying degrees of laxity and selectivity in regard to observance; *lo dati* or *hiloni* means non-observant (although here, too, some customs may be observed).

A Jewish identity is a peculiar blend of religious and national components inseparably interwoven, and the data of our study strikingly bear out that a weakening of the religious components leads to a weakening of the Jewish identity. In regard to all the criteria of Jewish identity which we set forth, the *datiyyim* stood highest, then followed the traditionalists, and the non-observant came third. Not only do the religious students differ in the content of their Jewishness and the value they attach to it, but they are closer to, and have a greater identification with, Jews everywhere. They are the hard Jewish core of Israeli society.

While in the Ashkenazic communities the trends toward secularization had made serious inroads among the generation of parents, the process is only now taking place in some of the "*edot hamizrah*"—the Oriental communities. The parents in these communities have remained faithful to their traditional practices, but a number of their sons and daughters have broken with the established family patterns. Bereft of the traditional Jewish values, they remain without anchor or rudder.

An acute problem exists in regard to the Jewishness of these young Israelis, as well as the others with whom religious observance has declined or who can no longer accept a religious orientation. Increasing attention is now being given to the question as to how paths to an intensified Jewishness can be opened up which are in keeping with the historic Jewish tradition and, yet, can be followed by members of these circles as well. Given the common traditional core, it would seem feasible, in a Jewish majority society, to form diversified expressions of Jewish living around it.

There has been a noticeable absence, in recent years, of a religious leadership which conceives of its function as embracing guidance to the non-religious as well as to the religiously committed. The election to the Chief Rabbinate of Rabbi Shlomo Goren, who sees himself as a disciple of Rabbi Kook, and who has expressed himself as anxious to reach out to the secular sector, is an encouraging development.

### *Understanding Contemporary Jewry*

We have referred to the extensive Jewish knowledge of the young Israelis. But educators are becoming increasingly aware of the serious lacunae in the knowledge which Israeli youth have of recent Jewish history and of contemporary Jewry, although some advance in this direction was made in the school curriculum as a result of the initiative of the late Zalman Arane, then Minister of Education.

An analysis of the conception which the young Israelis have about the Diaspora shows that it is based largely on what they have learned about Jewish communities in Europe and in the Middle East. While the students can understand the plight of a Jewry facing persecution or grave discrimination, and feel themselves close to the Jews who are so attacked, they cannot easily comprehend the problems of Jewish communities living in the Western democracies. What was conspicuously absent in the interviews with students was an insight into the subtler predicaments and dilemmas faced by Jews in a free society, a compassionate feeling for the Jewish strivings and the Jewish unease peculiar to these communities.

The Six Day War sharpened the sense of Jewish interdependence among Israel's youth. The memory of the Holocaust had been simmering at the back of the minds even of a generation born after that devastating catastrophe, and the events of May and June 1967 brought that memory strongly to the fore. Furthermore, Israelis saw how, in the testing hour of danger, Jews throughout the world spontaneously and unreservedly rallied to their side. The assertion of their identity by the Jews in Soviet Russia and their determined struggle to immigrate to Israel, has also had its impact on Israelis, as on Jews in the U.S. and elsewhere.

The growing feeling of a common Jewish destiny and of Jewish solidarity, coupled with the wide acceptance of mutual responsibility, are foundations on which an educational program for the intensification of the Jewishness of Israeli youth can be constructed. At the same time, there is a need to face the problems of: a weakening in the Jewish identity which comes with the decline of religious observance, the fact of the low attractiveness of their Jewishness for a considerable minority of secular Israelis, the consequences which flow from a sundering of the Israeli and Jewish subidentities, the tendency to adopt a conception of the Jewish past in which periods of Jewish life in the Diaspora are obscured, and the failure to understand the peculiar problems of Jewish existence in the Western democracies. But while the basic attitudes have not fundamentally changed, the events of this period have created a psychological climate which can facilitate the development of a program designed to strengthen the Jewish identity of the Israeli.

The development of such a program—even when the climate is favorable—is no easy matter. In the case of the religiously observant young Israeli, the home, religious school and religious youth movement interlock to produce an intensity of Jewish identity. When we consider the problem of the secular youth, the school is again just one in a constellation of factors. But in relation to this one factor, which is, at least, amenable to change, much remains to be done in terms of the planning of the curriculum and, even more importantly, the training of teachers.



# *The Jewishness of Israel's Youth*

JACK J. COHEN

FIFTY YEARS AGO, YAAKOV KLATZKIN FORESAW the impact which Jewish settlement in Erez Yisrael would have on the morphology of Judaism: "We do not aspire to the Land in order to sustain there the ideas of Judaism. Territorial redemption is for us an end in itself. The content of our life will be national when its form will be national. Moreover, do not say the Land is a condition for our national existence, but rather that life in the Land is itself national existence."<sup>1</sup>

The pyramid of Jewish life once again rests on the broad base of Jewish nationhood. This is a reversal of what the Jewish people had experienced during the long Exile, when Judaism was cast in the form of an upside down pyramid, with Jewish groupness resting on traditional spirituality and religion. Henceforth, Judaism will be built up from the national base that has now been laid in Erez Yisrael. The term "Erez Yisrael" instead of "State of Israel" is used advisedly, inasmuch as the development described by Klatzkin had already been largely consummated by 1948. In the past, each encounter of the Jewish people with Erez Yisrael had been marked by the reconstitution of Jewish polity, a process which was accompanied by radical change in the ideology and practices of Judaism. The Return of our own day, entailing a virtual implosion of Jewish ethnic, cultural, conceptual, religious, linguistic, economic and political styles from the four corners of the earth, is also concentrating on the business of accommodating Jewish nationhood to the demands of contemporary conditions.

The natural question that occurs to many Israeli Jews is: To what extent is the State of Israel the polity of the Jews who live within it? Is Jewishness, in other words, synonymous with Israelness? As far as Israel's youth is concerned, they consider themselves Jewish, an identity which has something to do with, but is not identical with, "Israeli." The youth regard their Jewishness as indispensable in their Israelness, although to a lesser degree than do their parents. But the contents of both Jewishness and Israelness are uncertain.<sup>2</sup> Both Jewishness and Israelness are in the making.

It is impossible to establish hard and fast categories of Jewishness which might enable one to evaluate the achievements and adjustments

1. Y. Klatzkin, *Tehumim* (Berlin: Dewir, 1925), p. 40.

2. See, Simon Herman, *Israelis and Jews* (New York: Random House, 1970) for a thorough analysis of the Jewish- and Israel-consciousness of Jewish youth in Israel.

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of each generation of Israel's Jews. One can, however, describe what Jews are trying to do in the State of Israel, outline the questions they ask and their answers (to the extent that they are available), state one's opinion as to what would be a desirable form of Judaism in the State of Israel and, perhaps, hazard a guess as to what is likely to occur. In this paper I propose to sketch several patterns of behavior among Israel's youth, the background out of which they have merged, and to suggest possible lines of development.

The generation gap exists in Israel, but compared with the mood of alienation, ennui and violence against established institutions that prevail in so many Western countries, the youth of Israel can be said to follow firmly, if not docilely, in their parents' footsteps. Each of the various ideological movements and political parties in Israel has its "young guard," which ranges from being a passive following to a loyal opposition.

Orthodox youth are carbon copies of the older generation—sometimes a little cynical or non-conformist (for example, many Orthodox boys and girls walk along the streets of Jerusalem in close embrace, like secularist youngsters), but rarely far removed from the parental tree. The same pattern of criticism without rejection is true of the youth of the various secularist movements. However, there is a fundamental difference in the tone of internal criticism between the observant and non-observant sectors of youth. The former sometimes criticize the old-timers for their isolationism and smugness, their heavy-handedness and their refusal to reckon forthrightly with problems that cannot be solved by the strict construction of halakhah. But they are as loyal as their parents to the halakhah. They argue, however, that a way must be found to deal imaginatively with halakhic issues, and they believe that secularist youth can be won over to traditional Judaism. Hence, they tend to seek out a carefully controlled dialogue with the non-Orthodox. In the last two years, for example, Daniel Troper, a young American rabbi who has settled in Israel, has gathered about him an enthusiastic group of Orthodox youth who conduct a campaign of educational encounters with their non-Orthodox peers. These encounters bespeak an openness which is lacking among the older generations. Nonetheless, it is a limited openness, since *Gesher* (the organization which Troper has created) has not yet demonstrated a desire to have the masses of Orthodox youth exposed to the message of those among the non-Orthodox who have, or believe they have, a legitimate Jewish option. *Gesher* has introduced a constructive mood into the spiritual scene, but it needs a non-Orthodox partner on its level. The dialogue, in other words, is not yet between two equals, but between those possessing the "authentic" tradition and the "ignorant" and "misguided."

The sensitive youth among the so-called secularist sector criticize

their parents for having deprived them of their birthright. This sentiment is particularly acute among an articulate minority of kibbutz youth, who argue as follows:

You, our parents, came out of a background abounding in Jewish knowledge and practice. You rejected much of that heritage, but it was a rejection through choice. In addition, the circumstances of your generation were such as to provide you with rich substitutes for what you had rebelled against. Drying the swamps, fructifying the desert, building the institutions of self-government, even the necessity to fight for your existence—all this gave meaning to your lives. But you did not give us a similar choice of options. You kept us ignorant of most of the tradition of the Jewish past. Our home was, and is, devoid of profound ritual; our knowledge of the halakhah and its classics is virtually nil; and we suffer, too, from your successful revolution. For what is left for us except to serve in the army (your military service in the Haganah, Palmah, IZL or Lehi was also a matter of choice; we are conscripted) and to seek individual careers and personal advancement?

The youth who think in these terms try to overcome their emptiness by reaching out for the learning they never received and by seeking contact with anyone who can help them to explore the Jewish heritage. They come, therefore, in a spirit of inquiry rather than in an attempt to win over their partner in dialogue to their way of thinking and acting. In pursuit of their people's repressed past, they tend to look to Orthodox rabbis and teachers to provide them with the key to this vast treasure, because they believe that it is the Orthodox who have the requisite knowledge. Furthermore, they know of the readiness and the eagerness of the latter to serve the cause of Torah-true Judaism. As a result, during the past few years, small groups of kibbutz youth have been studying Talmud and other classical texts and have been influential in introducing the practice of *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*, the traditional study of Torah conducted during Shavuot night.

There is little likelihood that more than a handful of the young men and women engaged in these programs will be won over to Orthodoxy, but unless knowledgeable and well-founded alternative interpretations of the tradition are made available to them, and unless they can be convinced of the profundity of these alternatives, the chances are that the search for Jewish roots by this sector of youth will end in frustration. For what, after all, is the problem facing Israel's youth as a whole in regard to its Jewishness?

In the first place, the youth learn in Israel's divided school system that there are two types of Judaism, religious (Orthodox) and secular. For reasons having nothing to do with the inherent worth of the ethical and social content of the Rabbinic tradition, its exploration is denied to the children studying in general schools. As a result of their miseducation, they often come to detest traditional Judaism. On the other hand, the pupils whose education, through high school, takes place in the Orthodox system, are thoroughly conditioned to see Judaism and Ortho-

doxy as co-extensive. All other versions are considered illegitimate and their literature unworthy of study.

Intellectual freedom and honesty in the study of Judaism are, thus, circumscribed. When the secularist youth, then, look for the Judaism denied them by their parents, they are deluded into thinking that the only legitimate way for them to do so is to return to the point at which their parents made their anti-traditional decision. The youth forget their own understanding that their parents had an alternative philosophy to guide them, partially inspired by the very Judaism from which they had veered. However much Israel's pioneer generation may have rejected Jewish tradition, it had also absorbed it into its being. No one can live from birth to late adolescence or maturity in a certain style without its having a permanent effect on him. If the present generation feels the need to depart from, or to enrich, the Judaism to which it is heir, it must take two steps. Firstly, it must evaluate in proper perspective the Judaism in which it has been raised, which, on the one hand, it claims is empty, but which, on the other hand, has added new dimensions to man's understanding of work and cooperation, has fostered new values of freedom and equality, has helped restore to Jewish ritual the possibility of creative continuity and has provided for this and future generations a set of interesting questions (of life and death, power and responsibility, and the like) similar to those confronting our ancestors in the days of the Bible. It would be a tragic mistake for Israel's youth to underestimate, or to turn back on, the entire tradition of *ḥaluḇiut*—no less tragic than the inability of their parents to appreciate the magnificent and lasting elements of the halakhic heritage.

Secondly, secularist youth must provide itself with an adequate method of utilizing the Biblical and Rabbinic traditions. That method cannot be acquired by exposure to an Orthodox treatment alone of Bible, Talmud, and the Siddur. Nor, of course, can it be achieved by studying more of the classic texts in the manner customary in the general schools. Israelis—Orthodox and non-Orthodox—will have to confront one another in a spirit of free inquiry and open confrontation if the resort to Jewish sources is to extend the horizons of their lives as Jews.

Jewishness ought not to be measured solely by the degree to which the living follow the path set forth by past generations, even by large numbers of generations. While the identity of individuals and groups is dependent on continuity of character, it is also subject to growth and/or deterioration. A person is no less himself if he suddenly becomes a Communist after many years of devotion to religious fundamentalism. Similarly, the Jewishness of the Jewish people is no less apparent if ritual forms that have been hallowed for centuries suddenly lose their force and are abandoned or altered beyond recognition—or, for that matter, if altogether new ritual is brought into existence. One may justly criti-

cize the level of the new behavior, but it would be idle to declare the traditional forms Jewish and the latter non-Jewish.

It will be argued that this existential treatment of Jewishness deprives the Jewish people of standards of thought and behavior by means of which it can insure its collective continuity with the past and the future. But this charge is unwarranted. I am not arguing that Jews ought not cultivate standards for their cultural and spiritual behavior. I am merely claiming that departure from the norms of the past cannot, *a priori*, be the basis for calling one pattern (however hallowed) "Jewish" and another (however jarring) "un-Jewish."

A common, and unfair, way of evaluating cultures is to compare the best in one with the worst in the other. Thus it is argued: who is a better Jew, the one who sits on his veranda in Tel Aviv on Friday night playing cards, or the one in New York who attends synagogue? Instead of resorting to this kind of speciousness, I want to compare the best models among Israel's youth.

Some of Israel's youth are convinced that Jewishness is best expressed in ethical concern and cultural creativity and taste. Some of this group are also aware of the theological dimension and have begun to study Buber, Heschel, and other metaphysically-oriented thinkers. Their interest in Hasidism is prompted by its combined ethical and theological suggestiveness. The widely-read journal, *Shdemot*, published by the *Ihud Hakevuzot V'hakibbuzim* and edited completely by a youthful board, has become the focus for a high-level discussion of social, ethical and spiritual issues. *Shdemot* has achieved a level of seriousness matching anything in the Jewish world produced by professional journals. If the scope of *Shdemot* does not extend to the technical treatment of religious philosophy, this is because the magazine talks from, and to, the heart of young men and women who are truly "engaged." They are seeking, not formal structures, but answers to agonizing questions of man and God, the meaning of the Holocaust, the right of the Jewish people to Erez Yisrael, the road to peace with the Arabs, the way to inspiring ritual, and all the crucial issues that have to be met by Jews settling on the soil of Erez Yisrael. What can be more Jewish than *Shdemot* and the youth who produce it and study it?

These youth have unpretentiously evolved for themselves a set of life values. They are egalitarian and strongly supportive of the kibbutz experiment. Not all are kibbutznikim, and some leave the kibbutz in order to pursue careers which the kibbutz cannot offer them. All of them are critical of tendencies toward materialism and of the lack of attention to Jewish tradition in the kibbutz. But they agree that the kibbutz has introduced values of equality, simplicity and directness in human relations, responsibility and service to the community, and mutual help, all of which are essential in the building of a humane society. They

believe, with Buber, that the kibbutz is a non-failure. I should go further and argue that, for many youth, both for those who have left the kibbutz and those who have never settled on it, the kibbutz is frequently the measuring rod by which they judge their own life style. The kibbutz is as Jewish a creation as the synagogue, and Israel's youth, arguing for or against it, are expressing, in their way, their eagerness for an exalted Jewish life.

This sector is, however, confused. It is, after all, a loyal opposition, reacting against the ignorance of the Jewish heritage imposed upon it by the educational philosophy and practices of its parents. But its loyalty to the tradition of the parents has precluded its gaining insight into the nature of some of the problems it faces.

The confusion is manifest in the conversations recorded in *Bein Zeirim (Between Youths)*,<sup>3</sup> a follow-up to the widely read *Siah Loḥamim*<sup>4</sup> but dealing with the internal life of the kibbutzim, including problems of Jewish identity and spirit. One of the participants articulates a view which is heard all over Israel:

I think that, in the present situation, there is no escape from a serious return to the tradition. I do not think we can return to religion and to the style of *Neturei Karta*, and, indeed, that would be undesirable. But I believe that the purposive severing of ties, which stemmed from the idea of creating an original culture, a unique labor culture, failed and did not justify itself. We are now at the stage of some kind of return to *jüdische Wissenschaft*. We are heading toward the Jewish people as a whole, we are concerned about our connection with it.

This statement, so typical of sabra thinking, in the cities as well as rural areas, starts from several false premises. The first is that Jewish religion is definable solely in terms of Orthodox versions, particularly the extreme, less attractive forms. Almost every non-Orthodox Jew in Israel, youth included, will say, "I am not religious, but ——" The second is the assumption that, in their desire to be original, Israel's pioneers wanted to turn their backs completely on their Jewish heritage. This is a one-sided historical evaluation of what the founding generations of the Yishuv were trying to do. While they were undoubtedly anti-rabbinical and hypercritical of halakhic Judaism, they accepted the burden of the prophets and hoped to revise the sancta of Jewish tradition to fit their humanistic socialism. Even the Marxists among them, although averse to anything connected with the synagogue, sought to fashion a life which would be Jewish. If their achievement was often shallow and evanescent, by what criterion ought we equate Jewishness with permanence or longevity? It is at least open to question whether there are eternal values and institutions in any society, and the mere fact that some of the efforts of Israel's founding generations have produced results

3. Published by Am Oved for a group of young kibbutzniks, 1969.

4. Published in English as *The Seventh Day*.



of limited duration is no reason either for deeming these efforts a failure or for denying the Jewishness of their achievement. Thirdly, it is short-sighted to charge the *ḥaluzim* with having failed to produce a worthwhile culture. If *ḥaluziut* and its associated practices and character are, indeed, insufficient, they have, nonetheless, left their mark on today's youth. *Tohar haneshek*, for example, the idea that the soldier must use his weapon in full consciousness of the evil of war and must preserve human life whenever possible, is, after all, a creation of the fathers that has been fully accepted by most of the sons. The sons have also absorbed other qualities of *ḥaluziut*, some of which I have already mentioned above—the spirit of volunteering and of cooperation, the frankness and honesty of expression, the sense of proportion and propriety. Apparently, therefore, Israel's pioneers did justify much, if not all, in their way of approaching the remaking of Jewish tradition.

Moreover, non-synagogue youth, whom we are describing here, have begun to raise questions which many of their parents had repressed or never entertained. The same young man whom we quoted above states that we ought to realize that while Israel was created in order to transform a conglomerate of merchants into a normal nation, "the moment we stepped onto this land, every one of us dispossessed one Arab." Is this an expression of Jewishness? I believe it is, even though the assertion is a misguided interpretation of the complex set of dilemmas that accompanied Jewish land purchases and settlement in Erez Yisrael. This issue is debated again and again by the youth, and the very argument must be seen as a latter-day improvement in the moral concern of the Jewish people as compared to the self-righteousness of Joshua and his successors. If there was any question about Israel's right to the conquest and possession of Canaan, the Tanakh contains no record of it—at least not explicitly.

There are many youth (and older Israelis) who dub such doubters *yefei nefesh*, hypersensitive do-gooders who are over-concerned with public opinion rather than with Jewish rights and security. But this is surely unfair to the ethically sensitive youth whose questioning is motivated, not so much by a feeling that Jews have no rights to Erez Yisrael, as it is by their ardent desire to do justice to the Arabs as well. If Jewishness has something to do with morality, then Israel's youth is as Jewish or non-Jewish as the older generations—depending on how one relates Jewishness to moral stances. Suffice it to say, large numbers of Jewish youth line up at various points on the spectrum of Jewish-Arab accommodation. All of them have been victimized by the extreme premises to which Israeli Jews have become accustomed. Since Israel was created to be Jewish, the presence of the Arab must either be ignored or resisted. It is up to the Arab, if he wishes to live in Israel, to make the best of what the Jews are willing to grant him, but, if the Arab fights for complete free-



dom, then he is not demanding his rights but is demonstrating his basic disloyalty to the State of Israel. These presuppositions underly the thinking of many extreme Zionists. As far as the liberals are concerned, they are hard-put to defend what seem to be discriminatory, but necessary, policies like the Law of Return, administrative restrictions, employment limitations (for example, in defense industries), and the like. Neither group has learned the art of discriminating between short and long term objectives, immediate and gradual implementation of ideals, compromise between ideals (which is impossible) and compromise between those who wish to live together (which is essential).

The confusion of the youth in regard to tradition is very much part of the general malaise of the Jewish people in not having criteria by means of which it can build upon the past and create new ideas, ideals and sancta for the future. The Orthodox youth may find their way to more liberal interpretation of halakhah, but their position differs in no way in principle from that of the elders. Non-halakhic youth, however, lacking as they do any background in handling the evolution of Jewish tradition, are left helpless, because they believe that by not returning to what they deem to be authentic Judaism they will have lost all contact with their Jewishness. Orthodox power in Israel resides more in having convinced the non-Orthodox of the exclusiveness of their (the Orthodox) title to Jewish authenticity than in the authority they actually possess. Until the non-halakhists can free themselves from this burden, they will not be able to turn their attention to doing what their parents and grandparents neglected to do—develop a philosophy of man and God, polity and ethics, worship and culture, in which traditions will play a vital and indispensable, but not dictatorial, role.

As compared with this complicated inner struggle among non-halakhic youth, the Orthodox face a problem which is at once simpler and equally profound. It is simpler in that the acceptance of halakhah as a way of life eliminates the need to question fundamental premises. It can be argued that, since halakhah worked magnificently for so many centuries, all that need be done now is refurbish it. Indeed, this is what Orthodox youth do say. They want more courageous and sympathetic application of halakhic formulae and method. On the other hand, it is not so simple for them. Many have unconsciously accepted standards of humanity—equal rights for women, the moderate Arab claim to the right to share the possession of Erez Yisrael, democratic conceptions of authority and statehood—which they realize are either unknown in, or antithetical to, the halakhah. They are disturbed by the gnawing thought that the halakhah might not be flexible enough to incorporate the new patterns. Furthermore, Jewish society in Israel has proved to be pluralistic and resistant to the imposition of halakhic uniformity in most areas of life. Can an Orthodox person compromise and yet retain his integ-

urity as a traditional believer? It is this question which haunts youth and older Orthodox Jews alike and which explains some of the impatience with the tactics of political compromise of *Mafdal*, the leading Orthodox political party. The youth are split in accordance with temperament rather than with theory. One group is extremist in demanding consistency (although incapable, themselves, of living up to their demand) while the other, accepting as inevitable the steady secularization of Israel society, concentrates on building fortresses of Jewish traditional practice wherever and whenever possible.

In short, Israel's youth, like the rest of Israel's population, is shaping a Judaism which will be unique to the setting of Israel. It is far too early to predict its shape. But whatever it will be, it will be Jewish. Israel's Jewish youth are committed Jews. They cannot help but search out their past. The results of that search, in turn, will be conditioned by the kind of future they picture for themselves and their children. Judging by the caliber of Israel's youth, there is reason for hope. If ———

# *The Kibbutz: The State of the Dream*

MOSHE KEREM

A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO, AT THE HOME OF a veteran kibbutz leader, I was invited to participate in a small, informal discussion with Margaret Mead about the future of the kibbutz. With the sixth-sense of the anthropologist, Miss Mead posed the following question: "You are an intelligent, capable group of people and I hope you will have peace. In about twenty-five years, let us say, you will have drained all the swamps, brought water to the deserts and rejuvenated the land. What will then be the reason for living in a kibbutz?"

In a sense, Miss Mead was asking a question not only about the kibbutz, but, perhaps, about Zionism in general—and, though questions about future aspirations can never be answered conclusively, the answers do influence the evaluation of present facts. The kibbutz movement is, in many ways, stronger today than it was when the question was asked, but it is one which is nevertheless equally, perhaps even more, appropriate today.

One of the streams of classic Zionist thinking, of course, looked upon Zionism as a method of saving the Jewish people by normalizing them. In its more simplistic versions, this was articulated in a desire for a Jewish country to be ruled by a Jewish majority, worked by Jewish farmers and laborers, protected by a Jewish army and owning even to its own, though it would be hoped small, number of Jewish gangsters—in short, a "nation like unto all the nations." In its extreme form, this desire was an expression, in some paradoxically perverse way, of a drive to preserve Jewish singularity by ending it. It viewed Zionism as a pragmatic solution to Jewish need. Its emphasis was on saving Jews, building, developing, defending, normalizing.

Interwoven with this stream, however, there has always been a powerful parallel drive, not only to be a "nation like unto all the nations," but to be a "light unto the nations," a deeply rooted compulsion to make of the uniquely Jewish something uniquely universal. In this sophisticated world of the seventies, this kind of compulsion is admitted to by men of the world only with somewhat shamefaced embarrassment, but it is, nevertheless, impossible to understand Zionism without coming to grips with this visionary component, a component which one could call, after reading Gershom Scholem, a dialectic historical reincorpora-

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tion of Jewish messianic aspiration. Indeed, it is this visionary component of Zionism which has made it work.

Sociological theorists maintain that though such visionary components may be necessary ingredients for beginning the evolution of new societies, they give way, as time goes on, and must give way, to practical institutions and bureaucracies—the prerequisites for successful continuity. After a while, as utopia makes peace with reality, the vision becomes, at best, part of a legendary, idealized past. Sophisticated utopians, therefore, must understand that utopia is never realized. Successful utopianism is an ongoing sensitivity to the degree to which everyday behavior corresponds to an ideal direction. Utopianism, in this view, is continuous impatience. The self-satisfaction of success is deadly to it, for it is the tension between the dream and its as yet unrealized aspects which makes for continued movement.

It is the kibbutz movement which, perhaps more than any other facet of Zionism, has epitomized this visionary quality of the new Israel, and it is the state of its dream which may be an indicator of the state of the Zionist dream itself.

More than sixty years have passed since the founding, in 1909, of the first kibbutz on the banks of the Jordan at Deganiah. The creators and ideological molders of the kibbutz were socialist Zionists from Eastern and Central Europe. Emerging from a world of bloody persecution, they viewed political democracy and socialist revolution as a revelation, and embraced their doctrines with all the pent-up zeal of their down-trodden past. Some tried to escape Jewish identity altogether and became socialist internationalists. Those who opted for Zionism found Israel a country whose barren and wasted soil had to be restored, reclaimed and defended before even a meager living could be wrung from it. There was no point in launching campaigns against capitalism. The capital, itself, had to be created. These needs of the country combined with the socialist attitudes of the new settlers and with that profound sense of community which was the cultural heritage even of the anti-religious elements of European Jewry. The kibbutz provided a unique organizational and, yet, ideological format for their activity. The settler would be working, not only for himself, but for an ideal as well, and socialist purpose would be combined with national purpose. Through the group, pioneers could reinforce each other. The group could engage in cultural and political activity, sponsor education, provide physical security, cushion financial losses and absorb newcomers. Profits, when they came, would be reinvested in the cause. A totally new environment would be created which would be the new Judaism. The group was not merely a convenient and efficient way of building Zionism; group living was, in itself, inspirational, in itself Zionism, a driving mystique, a way of achieving an end, and an end in itself.

A great many things have happened in these turbulent sixty years: two world wars, the Nazi Holocaust, the rise of the State of Israel, the ingathering of fantastic numbers of exiles, three wars with the Arabs, years of dramatic Jewish history and years of great political and technological change in the world as a whole which affect, and must affect, the very ways in which Jews, and men in general, look at themselves. There are today close to 240 kibbutzim in Israel, comprising a population of more than 100,000 people, and there is almost no aspect of life in Israel with which the kibbutz movement has not been connected. There are, indeed, significant areas of Israeli life which cannot be imagined without it. The very choice of a place in which to establish a kibbutz has been a function of national policy, over and above economic or other considerations, and the map of Israel, itself, has, in no small measure, been determined by these choices. (As I write, the news is of the bombardment of new kibbutzim established since the Six Day War on the Golan Heights, which are not so far away from Kibbutz Kfar Giladi, established fifty years ago by Yosef Trumpeldor's comrades of the Hashomer for much the same reasons.) The development of modern Jewish agriculture, not only for its own sake, but because this was a requirement of Jewish nationhood, the establishment and the provision of leadership and direction for world-wide Zionist pioneering youth movements, the establishment of the underground base for the Palmah and Haganah, the mobilization of parachutists for Jewish resistance in Hitler Europe, the provision of leadership for the Israeli labor movement, with its unique economic, medical and social components, experimentation with new communal forms of Jewish customs and festivals—it is a long and varied list, touching upon myriad aspects of politics, security, education, economics and the arts.

The ordinary observer does not begin to encompass the wide range of kibbutz movement activity, interest and connections. To review some random statistics and facts: at the moment, four members of the cabinet are kibbutz members and some twenty are members of the Knesset (the movement is something less than 3% of the population. David Ben Gurion is a member of a kibbutz and Golda Meir plans to retire to the one of which her daughter is a member). The kibbutzim account for some 30% of Israel's agriculture. In industry, an area which kibbutzim have entered in a big way only in recent years after a long period of ideological hesitation, the movement already accounts for close to 7% of the national product, and this total is growing by 20% a year. Indeed, kibbutzim, in total, produce some 12% of the gross national product. An educational system has been established, based on a unique system of child-rearing, a network of elementary schools, regional high schools, child guidance clinics, and, in recent years, regional community colleges. Kibbutz-operated teachers' training colleges are attended at the

moment by some 2,000 students and have accounted for some 25% of Israel's elementary school teachers in general. One of these seminaries is the first teachers' seminary to be upgraded and incorporated into one of the universities, the Haifa University, as a full-fledged degree-granting institution. The movement maintains a post-secondary agricultural training school at the Ruppin Institute and trains future farm managers through a special arrangement with the Hebrew University at Rehovot. There are regional trucking cooperatives, food-processing plants, marketing and purchasing cooperatives, which import and export by the shipload, kibbutz-owned hotels, cotton gins, plywood factories and computer services. The national kibbutz federations operate technical services whose engineers and architects plan and build schools, dining rooms and houses, and analyze the economics of individual kibbutz projects. The federations operate their own loan services and financial institutions, sponsor literary journals, regional adult education institutes, theatrical groups, discussion circles and movement-wide amateur symphony orchestras, dance groups and choirs. One such choir recently sang under the baton of Pablo Casals and has just returned from a European tour. A kibbutz-operated gallery in Tel Aviv sells the work of kibbutz artists; some of the most significant writing by young people to come out of the Six Day War has been written by kibbutz young people, and a magazine established by some of them is probably the most influential publication of its kind in the country. Research institutes which deal with kibbutz education, kibbutz management, and kibbutz sociology attract scholars and researchers, both from Israel and abroad. Reputedly, one-third of the pilots of the Israel Air Force are kibbutz born, and, on a more somber note, close to 25% of the soldiers killed in the Six Day War were members of kibbutzim—an indication of what they are and what they do in the army.

One could continue to cite such statistics from every aspect of Israeli life.

Over the years, different individuals and different groups, which have been attracted to the kibbutz, have each informed it with something of their own background and outlook. There are orthodox Marxists and Orthodox Jews, Jews from small towns in Poland and Jews from Berlin, New York and Buenos Aires. There are very large groups of graduates of Zionist youth movements and there are individuals who came out of the blue, possessed of no Jewish background at all. There are members who came to the kibbutz as childhood wards of Youth Aliyah and joined the kibbutz or established a new one when they grew up, and there are young people from the slums of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv brought to the kibbutz by urban working youth organizations led by kibbutz volunteers. Kibbutz young people volunteer for a year of national service, in addition to their army service, some in new border settlements and

many to work with disadvantaged young people in the cities and the development towns. During any one year, thousands of young people from all over the world work, study and spend some time in a kibbutz, either as individual volunteers or as parts of organized groups.

In many kibbutzim, the third generation, and in some, the fourth, is now operating the kibbutz. All in all, some 75% of children born in the kibbutz have thus far remained in the movement, a rather remarkable figure by any yardstick.

But what is the state of the dream, itself?

The dream is, itself, of course, a totality—and any attempt to isolate its dimensions is in danger of missing its point. Bruno Bettelheim, looking at the mechanical organization of the kibbutz educational system—community organization and responsibility for the entire life of the child through a system of children's houses, a children's society, the creation of a group ethos and the use of a specific style of relationship between adult educators and children—felt that here he had found a model for the education of black children in the American ghettos. Aside from misjudging the real influence of parents, which any clinical psychologist dealing with kibbutz children would have been able to point out as present and powerful, he missed the point of the "dream"—what educates children in the kibbutz is, to use psychological wording, the ego-ideal of the kibbutz as a whole. The educational system is the kind of system which people possessed of such an ethos would almost naturally develop; it is a function of that ethos and that is what makes it work, and not the other way around. In a recent discussion with university people in Israel about the establishment of an autonomous kibbutz movement college within the framework of the university, this writer was asked, "What is so special about kibbutz education? Define it. Is there a kibbutz biology? And, if there is kibbutz sociology or kibbutz economics, can it not be a course within the ordinary framework of a university?" The answer again, of course, is that there is no kibbutz biology, or even kibbutz economics or sociology (although there are interesting insights to be gained in these areas by looking at the kibbutz). The kibbutz is a system of social relationships which is, in itself, educational.

Despite this totality, however, one must attempt, nevertheless, for the sake of analysis, to relate to some of its dimensions individually.

One dimension, of course, is the state of the basic ideology itself—pioneering Socialist Zionism and its relevance to modern Israel. The kibbutz was never a pre-conceived Platonic blueprint. It was, rather, an extemporaneous, highly innovative and changing application of a series of general principles. One of the classic internal kibbutz arguments which seems to have no end is, "When is a kibbutz not a kibbutz?" It is an argument which arises whenever a change is contemplated, such as: children living at home rather than in children's houses, the provision of television



sets to members, or the provision of greater independence in the individual use of consumer budgets, the introduction of frozen foods on a large scale in kibbutz kitchens, or the development of large-scale regional industry, to name but a few varied instances. When the outside observer comments that "If you do that you will no longer be a kibbutz," the veteran kibbutz member, despite the often bitter internal argument on the subject, smiles. For again, the observer has missed the point. It is the total process which is the kibbutz.

Deganiah, itself, for example, was established as a kibbutz when a group of workers took over a farm, then administratively operated by the Zionist organization, rather than allow the farm to close down. Children's houses were established in the first instance as pragmatic solutions to the problems of housing and of women's desire to work. Where agriculture was difficult, kibbutzim established industry, despite their previous adherence to those elements of the movement which emphasized agriculture. In each case, the philosophy was developed afterwards.

These general principles were based on the needs of the country as perceived by the kibbutz movement. The country would never be Jewish unless actually settled and farmed by Jews. Such settlements must be founded with an eye to the future map of Israel and must engage, first and foremost, in developing the land. In a recent issue of *Shdemot*, the magazine put out by a group of young people who come from all the kibbutz federations, there appeared a remarkable document—an annotated diary of Kibbutz Kedmah, a kibbutz which broke up. The people in Kedmah were originally slated to settle on the southern shore of the Dead Sea. The diary is a tale of personal hardship which people undertook as a result of movement persuasion and discipline. For years, part of the group was compelled to "live up North," families were divided, there was no money. Literally hundreds of idealistic young people went through Kedmah and were "broken"—leaving the kibbutz after differing periods of time. When the kibbutz movement finally agreed to the group's abandoning the project at S'dom and settling instead at a different site in the Negev, the members did not have the strength to continue. Kedmah was established at this second site and led a troubled existence for a number of years, until it was finally abandoned, with some of its members joining other, established kibbutzim and some leaving the movement entirely.

Another general principle was that intellectuals pursuing intellectual pursuits could not build the new Jewish nation. They must "productivize themselves" and become physical laborers, for without the reversal of "Borochov's pyramid" the Jews could not be normalized. Jews must, themselves, work, and not profit from the labor of others. The kibbutz must not hire labor. All labor is of equal value and no one in the kibbutz should be allowed to benefit from vocational or leadership position. Decision-making should be a group process in which all participate.

Still another principle viewed Zionism as a process of emphasizing and rebuilding elements of the Jewish heritage which were the bases of Jewish ethical nationhood (to use a phrase coined by Dr. Mordecai Kaplan, unbeknownst to kibbutz people, who, when they have come into contact with Dr. Kaplan in recent years, have found him a kindred spirit). This approach has many practical and cultural implications in areas such as Jewish customs and holidays, as well as literary and artistic expression.

A cardinal principle has been that Zionism is socialist in the kibbutz view and, consequently, must evolve a relationship with socialism on an international level.

The kibbutz movement has felt that it must, moreover, be active as a movement on all these levels in influencing the character of Israel, itself, over and above the implementation of these principles in each individual kibbutz.

In practice, some of these principles have, at times, been in contradiction with each other, at times in contradiction with existing kibbutz structure, at times required ad-hoc organization and personal and community dislocation. Their continuous re-examination in terms of their own inherent validity, as well as in terms of the extent to which the movement is actually relating to them, has been the stuff of which the kibbutz movement has been made.

What is their validity today?

Settlement, since the Six Day War, is again a prime need of the country. The kibbutz movement, through the youth movements which it leads, through the army Nahal framework and through many of its children, is heavily involved. The truth is, however, that the overwhelming majority of Nahal soldiers do not remain in the newly established kibbutzim after their army service, being attracted by the universities and other challenges of Israeli life. The kibbutz movement is slowly growing in numbers, but the Israeli population is growing at a much faster pace and the proportionate kibbutz percentage of the population is getting lower. The new immigrants from the Soviet Union do not seem to be interested in the kibbutz, as yet, and social formations other than the kibbutz may have to fill the settlement gap.

Agriculture is no longer Israel's prime need, nor, for that matter, can it sustain the standard of living to which modern kibbutzim aspire, despite the somewhat ascetic kibbutz antipathy to the conspicuous consumption which characterizes some elements of Israel's urban society. Consequently, most kibbutzim have already added industrial components to their economy or are contemplating doing so, either individually, or on a regional basis in partnership with other kibbutzim. During the mass immigration of the fifties, kibbutzim undertook to take on large numbers of hired laborers as a national commandment, despite their original principles. The internal damage to the kibbutz ethos was great and the

movement has struggled constantly ever since to phase out such branches, substituting mechanization and automated activities wherever possible, not always with success. Industrialization, coupled with the influx of cheap labor from the occupied areas since 1967, does not make this task easier.

But the future poses an additional problem—the increasing numbers of kibbutz-born young people who have been to university and wish to pursue an academic or professional or scientific career. These people, plus many immigrant academic people from abroad, see the kibbutz as a home with whose general ideals they identify—on condition that they can work in their field of interest. There is a limit to the number of places of work of this nature that the movement can create within its own economy—though there already are a number of interesting experiments being conducted. Can the kibbutz absorb large numbers of members who commute to work outside the kibbutz on a permanent basis? What will this do to the internal social pattern of the kibbutz? What will be the meaning of kibbutz life for the scientist travelling to work at his research institute every day (or flying off to his scientific conference in Geneva)? Will it continue to be relevant in the Israel of the future if it cannot absorb such people? Who will milk the cows? Who will iron the clothes in the tailor shop? It would seem that the kibbutz movement may be facing an agonizing basic realignment of the kinds of work in which kibbutzim engage and a period of new experimentation to see how this can be made to fit its social principles.

One of the most traumatic aspects of kibbutz movement history has been the almost neurotic pro-Soviet orientation of a significant part of the movement—neurotic, of course, because unrequited by the Soviets. More than any single reason, it has been the gradations of opinion on this issue which have accounted for the separate existence of different kibbutz federations and the heart-rending splitting asunder of kibbutzim, still remembered from the fifties. In a poem entitled *600 Ambassadors*, a young girl from Hashomer Hazair writing immediately after the Six Day War, expressed the final disillusionment of the movement on this subject. “Our ambassadors,” she said, “the 600 soldiers who died, were sent to the Jewish God—not to any human political capital.” The Russian orders overheard on the Syrian intercom ended the debate. The Hashomer Hazair kibbutz federation, (which is one third of the kibbutz movement), has remained with a small minority which still romanticizes somewhat about the “world of tomorrow,” but it has become clear to all that there is no international socialist movement (both in the East or in the West) which can serve as a model for the kibbutz. The kibbutz is a Jewish socialist creation, its roots are Jewish and its concerns are Jewish. In a series of remarkable writings since the Six Day War (some published in English under the title *The Seventh Day*), kibbutz young people have

often bitterly accused their elders of not understanding that the future of the kibbutz lies in its being understood as ethical Jewish continuity. There seems to be significant, though fumbling, movement toward renewed interest in Jewish philosophy and tradition. Martin Buber's prediction that the kibbutz, by the very fact of its existence, would ultimately be dialectically compelled to travel in this direction, despite its initial rejection of a great part of *galut* Jewish reality, is very much in the minds of a number of these young people (with whom, indeed, Buber is a popular figure). The red flag has faded and the Jewish social tradition has been reinforced. Whether the searchings of this intellectual minority of young leadership will spread and deepen remains to be seen.

The common ideological and behavioral base of the various kibbutz federations today far outweighs the differences which once pulled them apart. Communities which once believed, with A. D. Gordon, in small, organic agricultural settlements based on an almost Tolstoyan ethic, are now large and industrial, and communities which believed in an ever-growing, ever-expanding kibbutz now know that there is a numerical limit above which the kibbutz ethos may be dissipated. The Soviet Union is no longer an issue. There are political doves and political hawks in all the federations. Nowhere is this common identity more apparent than in the army, where young people from all the kibbutzim, be they extreme Orthodox or extreme left-wing, find each other and gravitate towards each other, possessed of a powerful common set of behavioral patterns and interests. Amos Oz, one of the important young kibbutz writers, undoubtedly expressed the opinion of the overwhelming majority of his generation when he stated recently that the only reason for the continued separate existence of the kibbutz federations is to serve as bases for the political and organizational ambitions of groups of leaders. It remains to be seen whether this younger generation will be able to overcome the ensconced position of these leaders and unite the movement. If they should succeed, they could cause a dramatic change in general Israeli politics, for they could force the final coalescing of the Mapam, Ahdut Haavodah and Avodah elements into one broad, united party, which would, in turn, strengthen the movement itself and its position in Israeli society.

The physically apparent, easily explainable, national functions of the kibbutz, such as settlement, security and economic development, are still there and are still capable of arousing enthusiasm, but they have, nonetheless, diminished in importance. What has remained is the less readily apparent, more subtle, infinitely more difficult challenge—the kind of country that Israel will turn out to be, over and above its modern technology and military prowess. It is this part of the kibbutz dream, the way in which it will, or will not, continue to translate its social and

ethical and Jewish approaches into concrete contributions which is increasingly important.

Miss Mead's question, put at the beginning of this article, must, then, again be considered. As the character of kibbutz national purpose changes, the internal day-to-day life of the kibbutz becomes increasingly significant.

Is the kibbutz really classless? Is it truly democratic? How many people really feel themselves directly involved in its decisions? What about the place of women? What kind of children—not necessarily as pioneering Zionists, but as human beings—does it produce? Is the kibbutz a possible answer to the alienation of crowded, urban, post-industrial society? Will the kibbutz of the future be a community of rich, kulak-type peasants, or will it renew and retain its messianic fervor?

The kibbutz of today is no longer composed of a group of young, enthusiastic bachelors or newly-married couples. The average kibbutz is a complex, pluralistic community, made up of children of all ages, of grandparents and parents, of people from different countries of origin, possessed of different levels of education and different reasons for being there. There are the strong and healthy, the sick and infirm, those who work within the kibbutz economy and those who commute to work elsewhere, contributing their salaries to the kibbutz, veteran founders and people who were born in the kibbutz, people who have married into the kibbutz, people who are part of local and national leadership and people who would like to leave but have chosen to remain for a variety of personal reasons.

Many internal attitudes have changed. In their youthful enthusiasm, many of the kibbutz founders of forty years ago viewed the family as an enemy of the community—a focus of individual entrenchment and vested interest. Opposition to the family was combined with an ideological commitment to the emancipation of women, best expressed, perhaps, in the title of a pamphlet issued over thirty years ago by one of the kibbutz federations entitled, *The Biological Tragedy of Women*. With the actual growth of the family, however, it has become an increasingly important focus of kibbutz life (to the consternation of American "communards" and women's liberationists who come to visit). One indicator, among many, is the increasing demand by women born in the kibbutz to have their own children sleep at home rather than in children's houses. Over the years, women have increasingly gravitated to working in traditional women's occupations, unlike the women of the founding generation. The swing has been so great, in fact, that today's generation of kibbutz girls is again demanding the opportunity to break away from these occupations—though not at the expense of the family.

Even in the largest kibbutzim, the community is still conducted by a weekly general meeting of the membership and by committees and functionaries chosen on a rotating basis. In many areas, however, administra-

tion has perforce become professional, requiring specialized knowledge, training and relative permanence. Many items are too complicated for discussion at a general meeting, and in many kibbutzim attendance at meetings is spotty. The pressures of public opinion, however, are so great, and informal sensitivity to criticism so acute, that people often hesitate to assume leadership positions.

Over the years, members have accumulated all kinds of personal effects. Some people's rooms are nicer than others, some receive gifts from relatives, and some travel abroad at the expense of that American aunt and uncle. The movement has weathered the period of German reparations when some people chose to leave rather than hand in their money, while, on the other hand, others gave what in some communities added up to millions of pounds. There are people who are "more equal than others" in personal prestige and position. In the more established kibbutzim, however, rooms are often equally well furnished at kibbutz expense, trips abroad are provided by the kibbutz and a great deal of the sting has been taken out of the inevitable minor inequalities. Though they are often the cause of great irritation and complaint, kibbutz members know that, in a crisis, kibbutz support is almost unlimited.

According to research conducted by Tel Aviv University Psychology Department, the kibbutz is the one place in Israel where there is no statistical difference between the I.Q.'s of children born of parents from Europe and America and those of children born of parents from Asia and Africa. This fact may be a real contribution to the world-wide debate about the reversibility of cultural deprivation. Kibbutz-raised children in the Israeli army test out statistically superior on differential perception tests, despite hypotheses by outside observers about field dependency and conformity. Comparative research, which has matched kibbutz young people with children from the United States and the Soviet Union, shows them to be more independent than Soviet children and yet more internalizing of their parents' values than American children. Some recent research, however, indicates that kibbutz children may not make full use of their intelligence potential and that kibbutz adolescent girls may suffer from identity problems. It is the kind of movement, however, which reacts immediately to such findings by trying to implement change.

In recent years, an organized attempt has been made, with the help of American behavioral scientists, to use techniques of sensitivity training and organizational development in raising the participation level of kibbutz membership in community affairs. *Over and above the problems, however, the basic tenets remain: joint ownership of the means of production; unlimited mutual responsibility; direct democracy; communal channels of consumption; community responsibility for education; creativity and pride and group identification as the incentive for work.* The kibbutz does not eliminate problems. It presents its members with a dif-



ferent set of problems than they would face elsewhere. The choice is between these two sets and the value systems upon which they are based.

The kibbutz has proved itself economically. Still, there are considerable elements in Israel who feel that it has outlived its usefulness. Technocrats, pragmatic government officials, and professional soldiers are irked by the ideological considerations which it forces them to take into account in their day-to-day activity. New immigrants from the Soviet Union erroneously mistake it for a kolkhoz. Visiting American professors still more erroneously mistake it for a hippie commune. The burgeoning new nouveau riche, urban, middle class prefers American suburbia as its model. Within the kibbutz itself there is no guarantee that young people who did not choose the kibbutz, but rather were born into it, will not decide that there is nothing wrong in running the kibbutz with Arab labor from the Gaza Strip.

For the Zionists who dream, however, it may be more relevant than ever. Jewish continuity is many things. It is learning. It is piety. It is sheer stubborn, physical determination to continue as a people. It has never been formal, lip-service, "sociological" identification alone. Kibbutz members view its essence as personal involvement in a socially principled Jewish community in which the dictum that *lo hamidrash ikkar ela hamaaseh* is translated to mean that the *maaseh* demonstrates the midrash.

That the kibbutz of which I am a member will still be here twenty five years from now there is no doubt. But the extent to which the movement will continue to be relevant will depend on its ability to continue to move creatively and innovatively in this direction. It will depend on the quality and atmosphere of life in Israel, on the movement's ability to overcome institutional and organizational inertia, on the extent to which dreaming itself will continue to be important to it. It is the kind of dreaming which requires patience, tolerance, profound identification, perseverance, and continuous struggle with one's self, one's values and one's beliefs. In a way, it reminds one of the dream of Jacob, the first Israel. It is a Jewish kind of dream.



# *Towards A New Jewish-Christian Understanding in Israel*

COOS SCHONEVELD

IT MUST BE ADMITTED THAT THE HOLY LAND IS an underdeveloped area in matters of inter-faith and ecumenical relations. If we think of ecumenical affairs, then the situation around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre comes to mind, where for some two hundred years the vested interests of the various Churches have been frozen in a kind of uneasy balance known as the *Status Quo*, defining the rights of each denomination within the Church, and where often a very tense situation arises. It must be said, however, that in recent years there has been some improvement in the situation regarding the Holy Sepulchre, as it has proved possible to reach a measure of cooperation between the Churches over restoration of the building. Also, relations between the different religions in this country are often rather formalized in nature, due to the *millet* system, which gives each religion its own clearly defined rights and privileges and a certain amount of autonomy, and which has contributed to a very static situation with little scope for a creative kind of relationship. Each religious community has its own realm and there has been little room for exchange of ideas and points of view. This is especially true as far as the relations of the long-established communities are concerned, but with the emergence of the State of Israel there are some signs of a change, especially where Jews and Christians are concerned, in this land. The establishment of Israel meant that new, and especially Western, elements were being introduced into the Middle Eastern situation, and with this, also, there developed types of relationship between Jews and Christians similar to those existing in some American or West European countries. In this article I want especially to focus on the development of a new kind of relationship between Jews and Christians in this State.

The Jewish People continues, even to the present day, to constitute a challenge for the Church and for Christian theology. We have to note that the Church has an ambivalent attitude towards the Jewish people. Throughout the centuries, a clear annoyance has been visible within the Churches that the Jewish People have continued to exist after the emergence of the Christian Church, for many people in the Church considered this fact a theological impossibility or, at best, a kind of anachronism which was bound to disappear gradually. On the other hand,

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there is an attitude of awe in connection with the continued existence of the Jewish People alongside the Church. Somehow, there is a conscious or unconscious awareness of standing before a mystery. Both attitudes point to the fact that the Church is, in a way, haunted by the existence of Israel as a separate entity alongside the Church, and is emotionally bound to Israel in a remarkable way. This becomes clear, for instance, in the continuing discussions surrounding the State of Israel and its politics after the events of 1967. On the one hand, there is an opposition to certain situations, which is not only of a factual nature but is also very psychologically loaded and vehemently expressed. On the other hand, there are equally interesting examples of support for Israel to an extent surpassing all reasonable thinking. There seems to be a remarkable love/hate relationship of Christianity towards Judaism. I am convinced that this kind of emotional reaction in either direction is an upsurge of a deeper, fundamental and, I would say, ontological bond between the Church and Israel, due to the fact that they have deep common roots.

The acknowledgment that this emotional attachment finds its ground in a fundamental bond of the Church with Israel has led to the fact that a number of Christians of various backgrounds are going to Israel in order to participate, in one way or another, in what is going on there now. It is clear that, with the establishment of the State of Israel, the Jewish People has entered a new phase in its existence. And Christians, becoming aware of this bond, which is not only emotional but, also, actual, want to participate in this new phase. It is remarkable how often Israel, like a magnet, draws people who, often in a rather confused way, are aware of this bond. There is a wide range of motivations and argumentations for coming to Israel. For Christians with a millenarian point of view, the restoration of Israel plays a very important part in their speculations, and they come because the establishment of the State of Israel is regarded by them as an omen of the Millenium. Many young people are streaming to Israel, hoping to find here solutions for their identity problems; they are apparently attracted by a whole people in search of its identity. We may further think of students who come to study for a year or more; of doctors devoting some time to working in Israel; and of priests and clergymen who are consciously sent out by their Churches to Israel, in order to reflect, by study and contacts, on this new phase which the Jewish People has entered.

In this article, I want to give a brief survey of activities in Israel in the framework of inter-faith relations. From what has been said above, it may already have become clear that these activities are mainly derived from the complex relationship between Jews and Christians which has been essentially a part of the European and American scene. Therefore, as far as the Christians are concerned, these activities are mainly en-

gaged in by Westerners, and the problems of relationships between Jews and Christians in Europe and America are, to a large extent, re-appearing here. There is, however, one important difference. In Israel, the age-long pattern of relationships between Jews and Christians is significantly different from the European and American scene, since the situation of a Jewish minority within a vast Christian majority has here been exactly reversed; this leads to a quite different appraisal on the side of the Christian of the Jewish reality.

And the Jews in Israel—what is their attitude to these activities? This also depends largely on the way they experienced their relationship to Christians in the past. A very large sector of the Jewish population in Israel comes from Islamic countries; as far as Jewish-Christian relations are concerned, there is generally little or no sensitivity to these questions, and no real interest. Another sector of the Jewish population comes from Eastern European countries. Here, the Jews were traditionally a persecuted and maltreated minority living a ghetto-like existence, and—also after the Communist take-over—they preserve deep in their hearts the memory of the Christian Churches as important sources of anti-Semitism. No wonder that many of these Jews feel that the chapter of relationship with Christians has to be closed once and for all, and that in the State of Israel, where the Jews have at last been freed from the burden of Christian pressures, there is neither need nor room whatsoever for continuation, or resurrection, of contacts with Christianity. This is an indication of the depth of the trauma which has eaten into their souls. The same traumatic experiences have led to an often exaggerated fear of missionary activities conducted by Christians in Israel, and the extraordinary opposition among some Jews to anything that arouses the slightest suspicion of “mission” can only be explained by these deep wounds in their souls.

Similar attitudes are, of course, also met with among Jews from Western and Middle Europe and America, but as there have been, since the time of the Emancipation, more cultural and social contacts between Jews and Gentiles in those countries, there is, generally speaking, a greater openness and readiness for exchange and dialogue with Christians among Israeli Jews with a Western European or American background. There are various motivations in this case to engage in discussions, encounter and exchange of views, which are not only of a purely idealistic nature. One important motive is of a political nature in a more general sense. There is an awareness that the State of Israel is in need of good relations with countries in which Christianity still plays an important role in society and culture, i.e., with a number of Western countries. Good contacts with Christians from these countries who are residing in Israel serve the purpose of better public relations with the Western, so-called Christian world. Though lacking a measure of authenticity in their

original motivation, these contacts, in several cases, have, nonetheless, developed, by their own momentum, into a genuine relationship of friendship and mutual respect between a number of Jews and Christians in Israel. In addition, there are Jews in Israel who have noticed that the confrontation with other religious, social and cultural groups in the Diaspora has greatly contributed, in the course of Jewish history, to the spiritual strength of Judaism, and they feel rather worried about the fact that in Israel many Jews, for instance in an exclusively Jewish town like Tel Aviv, meet only Jews and, therefore, are deprived of the challenge of meeting with other groups and of the self-enrichment that might ensue from it. The concerned ones, therefore, deliberately seek contacts with other faiths.

There are people in Israel who are worried by the foreign, non-indigenous and marginal element in inter-faith relations in Israel and deplore the fact that, for instance, genuine contacts between Jews and Arab Christians or Muslims are often very poor. And, if there are contacts, then these are not really inter-faith, overshadowed as they are by the issue of the Jewish-Arab conflict, so that no encounter of Jews and Christians, or Jews and Muslims, is taking place, but of Jews and Arabs: their national identities are far more involved in these contacts than are the religious ones.

A further complication for inter-faith relations between Jews and Arab Christians is that, in the Churches in the Holy Land, the indigenous Christians get hardly any chance to determine the course of policy and action, as the leadership of their churches is firmly in the hands of foreigners, whether Greeks, Italians, Frenchmen, Englishmen or Germans. The indigenous Arab Christians have practically no say in the administration of the churches they belong to. In this respect, as well, the Holy Land is an underdeveloped area. In other countries of the world, e.g., in the areas where Churches of the West have conducted missionary activities on a large scale (India, Indonesia and the African countries), the Church leadership is almost completely in the hands of the local Christians. But not in the Holy Land, although the Arab Christians trace their Christianity back to the first beginnings of the Church! This, among other things, has led to the situation that Christian Arab intellectuals have often, at best, a very loose and informal relation to the Churches to which they belong. This is a basic weakness of indigenous Christianity.

And where the Muslims are concerned, inter-faith relations with Jews and/or Christians are only in a very elementary stage. The political pressures are here also of an over-riding character.

All of these factors have contributed to a state of affairs in which inter-faith relations in the Holy Land are essentially a matter between Jews and Christians who are both from Western backgrounds. It is hoped—and there are already some signs pointing to it—that a friendly

inter-faith climate at the margin will have positive effects on more centrally located areas. And, therefore, there is no reason to be discouraged by the foreign character of inter-faith relations.

As the Christians actively involved in the field of Jewish-Christian relations are almost exclusively exponents of Western Christianity—Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Reformed, Presbyterians, Baptists—these people can be considered as a kind of link between a great section of world Christianity in all its pluriformity and the Jewish People in the State of Israel. They represent—as it were—the interest of world Christianity in this new phase that the Jewish People has entered with the establishment of the State of Israel.

It may be of interest to give a survey of some activities in inter-faith relations, in which several bodies and associations are involved.

The *Israel Interfaith Committee* was established in 1957 and is composed of representatives of the religious bodies in the country: Jews, Christians (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant), Muslims and Druze. Its objectives are to foster a spirit of brotherhood and tolerance without impairment of the identity and integrity of each group, and to maintain contact with corresponding organizations abroad. The Committee plans meetings and conferences on inter-faith themes, and two outstanding examples of events to which the Interfaith Committee contributed may be cited. The first was an international colloquium in November, 1970, on "Religion, Peoplehood, Nation and Land" organized jointly with the Harry S. Truman Research Institute of the Hebrew University and the American Jewish Committee, which provided a high-level forum for inter-faith discussions and exchange. The other example is the Congress held in Jerusalem in May, 1972, on "Black Africa and the Bible," which provided the opportunity for a very interesting dialogue between African Christians and Jewish and Christian scholars in Israel.

In a more practical vein, the Interfaith Committee is involved in the preparation of a community centre in the mixed Jewish/Arab town of Acre, aimed at social and cultural exchange between the two communities. The Committee is also looking into possible or potential complaints which may arise among the minority groups. In addition, people from abroad who are interested in inter-faith problems are received in order to give them information and clarification about the situation here.

Since the middle 60's, a small group of people in Jerusalem, led by Professor Zwi Werblowsky and Canon Peter Schneider, has worked very hard to establish patterns in which a real dialogue between Jews and Christians could be carried out. The first result of these efforts was the foundation of the *Jerusalem Rainbow Group*, consisting of about ten Jewish scholars and ten Christian theologians who, during the academic year, come together once a month for academic discussions. Usually, a paper is given by one of the members, followed by discussion. In the

course of the years, this forum has developed into a real group of friends, and has stimulated a number of inter-faith activities in Jerusalem.

Shortly after the establishment of the Rainbow Group, the *Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel* was founded. This was a variation of an idea that had been conceived a long time previously. Originally, there had been plans to establish, on behalf of international bodies like the World Council of Churches and the Vatican, an institute for Jewish/Christian studies in Jerusalem. But rather than have an institution of this kind "imported" into the Jerusalem situation, it was thought preferable that existing resources in Jerusalem and Israel be utilized, so that the new body should not be another institute alongside the several already existing, but should be an association which would bring together personnel already working in Jerusalem in various capacities. So, in February, 1966, the Ecumenical Fraternity was established, consisting of theologians of various backgrounds—from Roman Catholic to Baptist and a wide intermediate range, all of whom were already working in Jerusalem. Every month, seminars have been held on specific themes of importance for the deepening of understanding between Jews and Christians. Yearly themes have included: The Association of Land, People and Religion in Judaism; Interpretation of Prophecy; Biblical Exegesis; and, this year, Monotheistic Worship in Jerusalem. It is hoped that an anthology of lectures will be compiled.

Another section of the Ecumenical Fraternity is the *Student Christian Forum*, whose aim is to orient Christian students, both indigenous and overseas, to the religious, political and social situation in Jerusalem and Israel. Lectures and discussions are held and trips are organized, e.g., to an Arab village and to a Jewish religious kibbutz near Hebron.

The Ecumenical Fraternity also publishes a semi-annual bulletin of religious thought and research in Israel, *Immanuel*. Some of the members feel that they are in a position to communicate to the Christian world what is happening in the field of Biblical and Jewish studies in Jerusalem and Israel, especially as it might be of interest to the Christian world. A large proportion of the literary material available in the relevant fields appears in Hebrew and is, thus, virtually inaccessible to most of the Christian world. Therefore, the Ecumenical Fraternity decided to publish this bulletin containing English summaries of books and articles in the fields of: Hebrew Bible; New Testament and contemporaneous Judaism; Jewish-Christian relations, past and present; Contemporary religious life and thought in Israel. In order that the bulletin be as reliable as possible, an editorial board has been set up, consisting of one Jewish and one Christian scholar for each of the four rubrics, and the co-operation of other institutions has been obtained in publication. These are: the Department of Comparative Religion, Hebrew University; the Israel Interfaith Committee; and the American Jewish Committee, Israel



Office. The first issue of the Bulletin appeared in the summer of 1972.

The Ecumenical Fraternity is also responsible for the monthly page in the *Jerusalem Post*, "Christian Comment," the aim of which is to bring to the attention of a greater public, events and developments within the Christian communities in Israel, and in inter-faith relations.

Remaining in the field of publicity, we should also mention the beautifully produced quarterly magazine *Christian News from Israel*, published by the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs, about Christian life and scholarship in Israel and written in collaboration with clerics and intellectuals of all faiths.

A significant contribution to new relationships between Jews and Christians has been made by a group of French Dominicans who, on the initiative of Father Bruno Hussar, founded the St. Isaiah House in Jerusalem, which aims at being a centre for Jewish and Israeli studies. It offers programmes and provides guidance for the study of various aspects of Judaism, Bible, Talmud, Jewish history, Jewish philosophy, and Zionism. The present Superior, Dr. Marcel Dubois, lectures in Greek philosophy at the Hebrew University.

Other groups engaged in inter-faith relations are the Swedish Theological Institute, the American Institute of Holy Land Studies, the Fathers of Zion at Ratisbonne monastery, and, recently, at the Dormition Abbey on Mount Zion, new initiatives have been taken up on behalf of inter-faith relations concentrating on the aspect of worship.

After the Six Day War in 1967, a very interesting project was launched by the Ecce Homo convent of the Sisters of Zion, on the Via Dolorosa in the Old City of Jerusalem. On the initiative of the late Sister Aline, and in co-operation with the Adult Education Centre of the Hebrew University, an *ulpan* (i.e., language course) was set up in which Jews would be able to study Arabic and Arabs to study Hebrew, under the motto "If we are unable to reach a big peace in this land, let us start with a small peace." It was thought that when Jews and Arabs began to understand each other's language, they might come to a more comprehensive understanding of each other. The language classes are accompanied by all kinds of social and cultural activities aimed at creating closer relations between Jews and Arabs.

The activities so far mentioned are all based in Jerusalem, but there are also inter-faith activities in other places throughout the country. For example, in Tel Aviv, a Jewish-Christian dialogue group meets every week at the home of a Miss Mathys. Near Nahariya, in the north, there is a Christian agricultural settlement, *Nes Ammim*, which wants to participate in the development of the State of Israel in order to try to find new patterns of relationship between Jews and Christians. The members contribute to the Israeli economy by cultivating roses. Although intended to be international, most of the members at present are from Holland.



From the previously mentioned St. Isaiah House circle came the idea of establishing a settlement called *Nevei Shalom* (Oasis of Peace) where Jews, Christians and Muslims could live together, either on a permanent basis or in temporary fellowship. This centre is now being set up in the neighborhood of Latrun. Apart from the small nucleus of prospective settlers, there exists a larger group of Jews, Christians and Muslims who come together regularly in order to become better acquainted with each other's backgrounds and traditions.

Also worth mentioning are the activities of *Aktion Sühnezeichen*, a group of German youth working in Israel to atone for the Nazi crimes. They are involved in all kinds of charitable projects in Israel, and there is a German pastor, Dr. Michael Krupp, who gives guidance to these youngsters with regard to problems of Judaism in Israel.

Another organization which is very active in encouraging inter-faith understanding is the Israel office of the American Jewish Committee. It concentrates on assisting Christian clergymen, theologians, youth leaders, media personnel and lay leaders who are visiting or living in Israel to formulate their own judgment on aspects of Middle East life and problems, based on direct observation and meeting with people living and working in Israel. This office has, in addition, done a great deal for the improvement of Jewish-Arab relations.

Finally, some months ago, on the hill of Tantur between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, a splendid centre was set up, on the initiative of Pope Paul VI, the Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Studies. Here, scholars of Christian theology from all parts of the world come together to engage in research and dialogue. One of the objectives of this Institute is also to establish contacts with Judaism and Islam.

### *Conclusion*

In Israel, a new pattern of relationship is developing between Jews and Christians. It is different from those of the past because of the reversal of the majority/minority situation existing elsewhere. But this external change is accompanied in Israel by a change in Christian understanding of Judaism, since here it is no longer possible to ignore certain aspects of the Jewish reality which are basic to it, but which have often been played down in countries where Christians were in the majority, namely the *national* dimensions of Judaism. Let us express the hope that Jews in Israel, in the wake of better inter-faith understanding, may discover aspects of Christianity which were hidden from them in the Diaspora. Only when Jews and Christians begin to see each other in their innermost reality may the way be opened for a genuine encounter between the Church and the Jewish People.

# *Interfaith Relations in Israel*

ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN

ISRAEL'S DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE GUARANTEES that there will be "*freedom of religion and conscience, of language, education and culture*" and that "*It will safeguard the holy places of all religions.*" It was these considerations that were, consciously or subconsciously, in the minds of those who took the lead in initiating an organizational framework for the pursuit and cultivation of interfaith relations in Israel.

Some population statistics are relevant: According to the latest census, the population figures at the end of 1971 in Israel, not counting the occupied territories, were as follows:

2,636,600 Jews  
344,000 Moslems  
77,300 Christians  
37,000 Druzes and Others

The unique fact that in Israel Jews constitute the majority of the population lends special weight to Jewish initiative, participation and leadership in the interfaith movement. At the same time, the dramatic contrast between the physical propinquity of the holy places of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and their spiritual apartness, is a standing challenge to the cultivation of interfaith relations. If a meaningful interfaith pattern can be achieved in the Holy Land, it could generate repercussions in other countries.

In this part of the world, which is noted for visibility and acoustics, the difficulties in the area of interfaith relations are sharply obvious. The introduction of a new society and culture, predominantly Western and dynamic, into an Oriental and conservative area of the globe, has made the working out of a viable relationship more than normally difficult. An awareness of the difficulties is helpful to an appreciation of whatever limited progress has already been achieved in peaceful, neighborly co-existence of Jews, Christians and Moslems in a number of communities.

It should be borne in mind that the Jews who pioneered the modern settlement of Palestine at the beginning of the century, and who were mostly from East European countries, were hardly aware of the interfaith dimension. Generally, they came from a background of Jewish enclaves or ghettos, and, upon arrival here, were concerned with the building of their own new life in the face of the hazards of nature and the hostility of their neighbors. Nor could they erase from their con-

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sciousness the role of Christian persecutions in Jewish history. The Jewish immigration to Palestine from Europe during the Nazi period, when the Christian Churches were relatively silent in the face of barbaric anti-Semitism, was conditioned even more negatively. The mass Aliyah from Moslem countries had its own memories of discrimination and hostility. In addition, there was the defensive insularity of Orthodox Judaism. Hence, all in all, the background of the Jewish community in Medinat Israel was not conducive to a good interfaith relationship.

At the same time, the establishment of Medinat Israel induced a process of new self-evaluation in the consciousness of many thoughtful and sensitive Israelis. It stirred a good deal of self-questioning on: who is a Jew, what should be the relationship between Israeli Jews and Diaspora Jews, how should the Jew in Israel relate to his non-Jewish neighbors and fellow citizens, and what should be the relationship between Judaism and the Christian and Moslem religions? Would the Jewish State be ready to grant to minority religions within it those rights which Jews had asked for Judaism in the lands of their dispersion?

The matter was settled, in principle, in Israel's Declaration of Independence, which was quoted above, and the application of this principle by Israel's Ministry of Religions has left little room for criticism. In this respect, it may be said, parenthetically, that non-Orthodox Jews have more to complain of than do non-Jews.

Indeed, it is in the realm of people to people, within the State, where the criteria are not laws but attitudes, not prescriptions or proscriptions, but modes of voluntary relationships, that the character of the commonwealth will be fashioned. Hence, the importance of voluntary movements and associations.

It is sometimes charged against the Jewish majority in Israel that they have not paid sufficient attention to the Arabs who, in many places, live, not in separate enclaves, but as close neighbors. It stands to reason that the almost uninterrupted hostilities between Israel and the neighboring Arab states, accompanied by Arab denunciations over the air waves, have not been conducive to good relations within the borders of Israel. Yet such continued outside provocation is subject to the law of diminishing returns, and there are encouraging signs of first steps toward genuine neighborliness, frank exchanges of opinion and friendly association, particularly since the Six Day War.

The most natural partners in Israel for a dialogue with Jews are the Christian, non-Arab churchmen. This is due to the substantial cultural kinship between them, stemming from Occidental contiguity, especially in modern times, when contacts have been relatively free from the threat of Christian hostility, though the Christian stake in Arab countries in the Middle East has been a deterring factor in some instances.

In recent years, however, there has been a considerable infusion of

ecumenically-minded clergy, both Catholics and Protestants, from Western countries, who have been a salutary factor in the direction of the Jewish-Christian dialogue in Israel. The growing number of Christian students, visitors and pilgrims from Western countries has also been helpful in this direction. Many of the Christians who have come to Israel in the service of the Church, and who have been living here for some time, have felt what a leading churchman has called "the new experience of being a minority," and expressed the hope that this new experience may prove to be instructive and purifying.

While the Israel Ministry of Religious Affairs deals officially with the Christian and Moslem communities through a special department established for this purpose, there should be, on a less formal level, channels for ongoing intercommunications, interaction and a united pursuit of interfaith contacts and fellowship. This was the basis of the establishment, some years ago, of a "Committee for Interfaith Understanding in Israel and the World," now known as the "Israel Interfaith Committee."

The founding assembly was held on December 29, 1958, with about 100 people in attendance. Professor Mazar, then President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was in the chair. Greetings were received from President Itzhak Ben-Zvi; from the Minister of Religions, Rabbi I. M. Toledano; from the Latin Patriarch in Israel, Monsignor Vergani; from the head of the Municipality of Nazareth, Mr. Amin Georgura, who spoke in the name of the Greek Orthodox community; from the secretary of the Muslim Council in Haifa, Mr. Suhey Shukairy; and from the head of the Druze community in the Carmel, Sheikh Lavir Abu Rukan. The closing address was delivered by Mr. Moshe Sharett. Additional distinguished sponsors included Professor Martin Buber and Justice Simon Agranat. The late Ambassador of Israel to France, M. Fischer, had an important part in promoting the idea and its organization.

In the statement of purposes issued by this group, there are these significant declarations:

Since the establishment of Medinat Israel, the question of the relations between the adherents of Judaism and the adherents of other religions has attained an unprecedented degree of moral and social significance. . . . Among the citizens of Israel and adherents of different religions, there are many holy places and religious institutions scattered throughout the land, from which great numbers of people throughout the world derive inspiration. . . . The fact that the government of Israel exercises sovereignty over its citizens and institutions places a great moral obligation, not only upon the individual Israeli, but upon the Israeli public as a whole. The relations between the majority in Israel and the members of other religions in this sensitive area, constitute a probestone of the human and spiritual content of Israel's sovereignty, and are likely to have an influence on the ties between Israel and the nations of the world . . . as well as between Jews and non-Jews in other countries. . . . The aim of this council is to cultivate fellowship and tolerance between religious groups by means of broad educational endeavors which face up to existing difficulties and which seek to pave the road to mutual confidence. . . . The

council will seek to create contacts with similar organizations abroad in order to exchange information and for mutual consultations on actual problems which may arise.

The founding meeting and the statement of aims and purposes of this committee received widespread notice and elicited favorable comment in many countries and from many religious groups. The movement did not, however, succeed in making much headway, except for occasional publications and reception-lectures. The gestures were sporadic and there was no ongoing program. There was inadequacy on the Christian side, and deficiency on the part of the Muslims in building a pattern for a functioning interfaith relationship.

In recent years, this situation has improved. In 1965, the Rainbow Club was organized on the initiative of Professor Zvi Werblowsky, Professor of Comparative Religions at the Hebrew University, who has served as its Chairman since its inception. Its deliberately limited membership of about twenty, evenly divided between Jews and Christians, with the hope that in the course of time Moslems also will join, enables it to conduct nine monthly meetings a year, which are in the nature of theological seminars. At every one a paper is presented, followed by a general discussion. The subjects have been scholarly in nature, mostly in the realm of Christian and Jewish theology, but have also included dialogue themes with political implications.

All those in the Rainbow Club—Catholics, Protestants and Jews—are ecumenically-minded, a number of them are active in the work of their respective denominations, and all are concerned with the well-being of the State of Israel. One of the active members is the Most Reverend George Appleton, Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, who served for twenty years in Burma after having been Archbishop of Perth and, prior thereto, had been Archdeacon of London and Secretary of the London Diocese Council for Jewish-Christian Understanding. Among the Catholic members are Father Marcel Dubois, Superior of the Dominican St. Isaiah House and a lecturer in the Hebrew University, Father Bruno Hussar, also of the Dominican Order, and Father Joseph Stiasny, Superior of the Ratisbonne Monastery.

The personal friendship and mutual confidence which membership in the Rainbow group has developed over the years is a factor of no small importance in the fulfillment of its larger purposes. It is a unique asset to be able to confront a friend and colleague in ideological discussions with utter frankness in an honest give and take, without fear of offending personal sensibilities. A relationship of this kind, fostered over a period of years, can become a springboard for achieving good results in many cognate areas of interfaith relations. This, indeed, has happened.

The following actions by members of the Rainbow Club, in the

context of the 1967 Middle East crisis and immediately thereafter, are worthy of mention:

1. Just before the outbreak of hostilities, two of the Christian members pressed for an emergency committee meeting of the United Christian Council in Israel and succeeded in securing the only Christian statement from a group which included Christian Arabs, "that all states, nations or peoples of this area have an equal right to peaceful existence." One of these Rainbow members then flew to Geneva to transmit this statement to the Secretary of the World Council of Churches and, at the same time, to convey the prevailing mood among Israelis that they were facing the threat of "genocide."

2. After the 1967 crisis, the Christian members of the Rainbow Club collated into one document all the major religious statements of the world on that crisis, and appended to it some reflections by members of the group. These materials have been requested by many ecumenical libraries and have provided the substance for a number of papers and articles published in Israel and abroad.

3. At the decennial conference of Anglican bishops, held at Lambeth in 1968, a member of Rainbow was requested to deliver one of the background papers and the Rainbow group was singled out as an example of genuine interfaith dialogue.

The establishment, in 1966, of the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel, the first Christian theological address in Israel based on a new ecumenical attitude to Jewry, and involving a Christian reappraisal of the renewal of Jewry in the State of Israel, may be traced to the experience of the Rainbow group. The Fraternity recognized that Christian theologians in Israel, and especially in Jerusalem, had a unique opportunity to observe and understand Jewish thinking and feeling at its center, and, flowing therefrom, had the responsibility to transmit what was learned to the Christian theological world at large.

It may be said that the founding members of the Fraternity felt that there was a dangerous superficiality and shallowness in much of the ongoing Christian-Jewish dialogue in the West, which could result in a breakdown in moments of testing and crisis—as, indeed, had happened in the United States at the time of the 1967 Middle East crisis. They also felt that being in Israel, at the side of Israelis, provided a special challenge and opportunity for a meaningful dialogue.

The Fraternity, with the cooperation of the Christian Communities Department of the Israel Ministry for Religious Affairs and the Department for Ecclesiastical Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has entertained a growing number of distinguished Christian theologians and study groups visiting Israel. These occasions provide opportunities for a Christian appraisal of Christian life in Israel and the meaning of Israel to the Christian world.



Arising out of a growing concern over unfactual reports about Israel and about Christian life in Israel, which, unfortunately, appear quite often in some Christian circles in the West, there is a monthly feature, "Christian Comment," in the *Jerusalem Post* and in its weekly overseas edition. It is also transmitted to over a hundred Christian editors, writers and ecumenical press services. *Christian News from Israel*, a quarterly published by the Israel Ministry of Religious Affairs, makes another worthwhile, interesting contribution.

The secretary of the Fraternity, Rev. Peter Schneider, has been invited to consultations of the World Council of Churches, and it is hoped that these consultations may be reflected in better balanced statements on the Middle East by the World Council. The Fraternity is also attempting to awaken the Christian community in this area to the need of being concerned, not only with "holy places" and other legitimate Christian interests, but, also, with the responsibility of initiating and developing "holy ideas" of peace and interfaith comity. The work of the Fraternity has been brought to the attention of high ecclesiastical authorities in the Vatican and elsewhere.

Thus, the motivation which brought into being the Israel Interfaith Committee in 1958 has found embodiment in other forms of interfaith association, often sponsored and forwarded by some of the founders of the parent body. The alma mater, the Israel Interfaith Committee itself, remained dormant for some time, until it was revived nearly two years ago, chiefly through the initiative of Professor Werblowsky. Its current presidium includes Sheikh Tawfik Mahmud Asleya, Archbishop George Appleton, Professor Shmuel Hugo Bergman, Dr. André Chouraqui, Dr. Israel Goldstein and Archbishop Joseph M. Raya. Its energetic, dedicated secretary is Mr. Joseph Emanuel\* and the Executive Committee, drawn from all faiths, has members who have been actively identified with interfaithwork.

It aims to encourage branches in other cities. The Tel Aviv Dialogue Group, founded in 1964, was attached to the committee a year ago. There are similar groups in Haifa and in Acre, and efforts are being made to establish others in East Jerusalem, Nazareth, Ashkelon and Beersheba.

In Acre, where there have been tensions between the small Jewish population and the larger Arab one, a nucleus of Jews and Arabs helped to establish a community center in cooperation with the Buber Adult Education Center of the Hebrew University. A special seminar was organized to help prepare this group in its work, and they were also invited to Jerusalem, to the Ecce Home Convent, to meet the teachers and pupils of the Arab-Jewish Ulpan, which had been founded under the

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\* The author acknowledges with thanks the cooperation of Mr. Emanuel in making available some of the background material for this article.



same auspices immediately after the Six Day War, as a first effort to bring Jews and Arabs together.

The Interfaith Committee, together with the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity, co-sponsors *Immanuel*, a semi-annual publication of religious thought and research in Israel, whose aim is to present to the international English-reading public descriptions and summaries of books and articles in the field of Old Testament studies, New Testament studies and contemporaneous Judaism, and Jewish-Christian relations. Its editorial board is composed of Jewish and Christian scholars.

In January, 1971, under the auspices of this committee, a meeting was held in Jerusalem with Sheikh Muhammad Ali el Jaabari, the Mayor of Hebron, where he spoke about the particular status of Jews and Christians from the Islamic point of view, and called for cooperation among the adherents of the three great religions in fulfilling the word of God. The meeting received press, radio and television coverage. The guest of honor reciprocated the courtesy of the Interfaith Committee by inviting them to a visit with him in Hebron.

A well attended memorial meeting for the victims of the Lod Airport massacre was held by the Israel Interfaith Committee, in cooperation with the American Jewish Committee and the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel, in which distinguished members of the three religions participated.

Under the auspices of this committee, a Congress on "Black Africa and the Bible" was held April 24-30, 1972, at the Harry S. Truman Research Institute of the Hebrew University. The African sponsors were the Movement of Christian Intellectuals of Africa, the African Society of Culture, the Bible Society of Africa, and the Holy Roman Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. It was attended by clergy of various denominations and sects, among them Cardinal Zoungrana of Upper Volta, and was addressed by African and Israeli scholars. It was greeted by Archbishop Appleton, Archbishop Ajaman, the Apostolic Delegate, Monsignor Laghi, Professor Zvi Werblowsky and Dr. André Chouraqui. The attendance was large and representative, and the proceedings will be published. At the end of the Congress, the guests toured the country and the Holy Places.

The Israel Interfaith Committee is represented at meetings of the International Consultative Committee of Organizations for Christian-Jewish cooperation and in various other interfaith contacts. Its plans for the future include both the broadening and the deepening of its work. It hopes to carry out research programs, to establish—in cooperation with other institutions and organizations—centers for social and cultural purposes in cities with large admixtures of Jewish, Christian and Moslem populations, and to reach out to the younger generation.

If the broad scope of its program has not been matched heretofore

by the depth and penetration of its efforts, it is only because of the inadequate means at its disposal. As its resources increase, it is hoped that its impact will be increasingly felt. Its main financial support comes from the American Jewish Committee, the World Jewish Congress, the Jewish Agency and the Jerusalem Municipality. For the sake of its work, it is important that it derive its support from as broad a constituency as possible. Of greater significance even than the financial support is the sponsorship and cooperation of important bodies and important personalities in, and outside of, Israel.

The interfaith confrontation in the Holy Land is as old as Christianity, but the interfaith movement in Israel as an attempt to encourage spokesmen of Judaism, Christianity—both its Catholic and its Protestant segments—and Islam, to sit together, talk together and work together, is very young. Indeed, it is still in its beginnings, at the start of the road, and it is searching its way.

In the twenty-fifth anniversary year of Medinat Israel, it is appropriate to take note of the existence of this earnest, serious-minded interfaith activity which has the sponsorship of men and women of light and vision, and which addresses itself to a serious purpose and need. With adequate support, this well-sponsored activity can become a significant factor in the building of ever-growing understanding, goodwill and cooperation among the diverse elements of a uniquely significant society.

# *The Ingathering of the Exiles: the Oriental Communities*

YEHUDA NINI

## *Prologue*

AS I SAT DOWN TO PUT PEN TO PAPER, I SEEMED to hear the voices of my father and grandfather wafting to me across the great abyss that separates us from "the World of Truth," as the Hebrew idiom puts it. They were intoning the words of the *Shmoneh Esrei* ("The Eighteen Benedictions"): "Sound a great trumpet for our freedom, and raise up a banner to gather in our exiles, and bring us together from the four corners of the earth. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who gathereth in the scattered members of His people Israel." Unquestionably, it was this fervent longing that uprooted them, many years ago, from the rocky hill country of Yemen and brought them to the Land of Israel. They took that decisive step without rendering to themselves an account of the meaning of their action in leaving the country that had been their domicile for so many generations or of what they would find on arrival. For centuries past, they had been accustomed to include, in every legal document, the following formula: ". . . who dwells in such and such a place, which stands upon springs of running water: may it be laid waste and made desolate; and may the City of Jerusalem be built and made perfect." Places which had been their domicile from time immemorial (from King Solomon's day? Or did my forefathers go down to Saba in Southern Arabia—Biblical Sheba—along the "Spice Route?"), they considered to be their temporary abode. It was Jerusalem, Zion, Erez Yisrael, that was the element of permanence in their lives, even though they had been cut off from the Holy Land for two millennia, at least, and possibly for nearly three.

On arrival in Erez Yisrael, my forebears did not recall the good things they had left behind them in Yemen; they did not yearn for the date palms of the oases on the road to Ziḥan or Wadi Najran, nor did their hearts turn longingly towards the aromatic coffee plantations in the highlands of Ḥaraz. Whatever material or spiritual possessions they had were acquired for the sake of Erez Yisrael. Nor, on the other hand, did they heed the trials and hardships of daily life in their new home. I seem to hear them murmuring below their breath, when they found

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things exceptionally difficult: "Pleasant are the sufferings endured for the sake of Erez Yisrael." I am even inclined to think that they set out on their journey to the next world uttering that Talmudic saying. Thus, it is through no merit of my own, but by virtue of their uncompromising Jewish stubbornness, by virtue of their steadfast refusal to become identified with their environment that I am able to sit here with bare head, completely non-religious—the very anti-climax to the tension of their religious life—and write about such a religious concept as *kibbuz galuyot* in a purely secular spirit. Such is the nature of history: it mocks at us smilingly, while we make a mockery of ourselves with an amazing earnestness unworthy of belief.

## I

The concept of *kibbuz galuyot* is usually understood as having the significance it has gained in the religious context of the liturgical poems and synagogue service. We can take it as generally accepted that the "Eighteen Benedictions" were evolved in the Academy of Rabban Gamaliel of Yavneh, or else were given their final formulation there at the end of the first or beginning of the second century of the Common Era. At that time, and prior to it as well, there existed an extensive Jewish Diaspora. The climate of religious Messianic tension in which the Jews lived in that period led to their unequivocally associating the concept of *kibbuz galuyot*—of the ingathering of the exiles in the Land of Israel—with very real Messianic impulses. It is hardly necessary to point out that the atmosphere at the time was charged with a militant Messianic tension that found expression in frequent rebellions. Thus, the term had a deeply religious connotation bound up with the advent of the Messiah and the attainment of complete redemption. The words of the prayer, "Sound a great trumpet for our freedom, and raise up a banner to gather in our exiles," must be taken in conjunction with the Biblical verse (Isaiah 27:13), "And it shall come to pass in that day that a great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come that were lost in the land of Assyria and they that were dispersed in the land of Egypt; and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem." The expression "in that day" means the day of complete redemption, when the Messiah will appear and foreign rule will be brought to a final end and the Kingdom of Heaven will be established. All this implies a profound religious feeling, and the fullest religious significance has to be attached to these concepts—a significance that is bound up solely with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Hence, we may say that the Diaspora communities closest to Erez

Yisrael—those of Egypt, Cyrenaica and Yemen to the south and west, and of Babylon and Persia in the north and east—experienced the tension of Diaspora and Redemption with the fullest spiritual intensity. Diaspora (*galut*), Redemption (*ge-ulah*), *kibbuz galuyot* and Erez Yisrael were, for them, not merely words in the lexicon of ritual and tradition, but a reality near at hand. Was this due to geographical proximity? Were geopolitical and social and spiritual factors responsible? In my view, it does not seem possible to reach a clear-cut conclusion on this point. Hence, it is more convenient to assume that all these factors together were conducive to the fact that all of the militant messianic movements—namely, those that sought to give forcible effect to the concepts of Redemption and *kibbuz galuyot*—arose in the neighborhood of Erez Yisrael. From the towering spiritual cliffs of Masada, whose foundation is a spiritual falsehood—just as the teaching about Masada itself is founded on a spiritual falsehood<sup>1</sup>—one can view the whole procession of messiahs: Shirini, Abu Isa, Yudghan, David Alroy, Abraham ibn Shemuel, Abulafiya, David Hareuveni and Shlomo Molkho. After them came messiahs who were spiritual revolutionaries—men who altered the face of Judaism for generations to come: R. Isaac Luria (the *Ari*) and his disciple, R. Hayyim Vital, who formulated his teachings. And last, the false messiah, Shabbetai Zvi, who shook Jewry to its very foundations, and though it emerged from that ordeal with its life-force intact, it was badly hurt and prematurely aged. In short, we cannot think of a single Messianic movement—whether of the kind we term militant or spiritual—that did not come into being in one of the countries around Erez Yisrael or in Erez Yisrael itself.

As time passed, the Jewish population of Erez Yisrael dwindled, while the Jews of the neighboring countries fell into a prolonged torpor after having flourished, both spiritually and materially, for centuries. The failures of the Messianic movements that arose in their midst made them even more lethargic. The struggles waged by some of the greatest figures in Jewry against those who sought “to hasten the coming of the Messiah” resulted in deferring the realization of *kibbuz galuyot*. The militant fervor that had given rise to the various Messiahs—whom we are wont to dub “false” for no other reason than that luck was against them and that they failed—gave way to stagnation and withdrawal. No study has yet been undertaken to determine how much good or harm was done

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1. I must devote a few words to explaining this falsehood. It has found expression in the conversion of Masada into a symbol for education. Freedom, one's country and the like, are certainly lofty values and are worth fighting for; but they are not to be held more sacred than life. One's country exists for the sake of life. Similarly, the purpose of freedom is to serve life. Take away life from country and freedom and you deprive them of the truth that anchors them. To put those values above life means forging the frightful lie in the name of which, and for the sake of which, so to speak, millions of human beings have been tortured and done to death.

by those who fought the Messianic movement so uncompromisingly, especially in the countries closest to Erez Yisrael. Nevertheless, even in the absence of such a study, we may be safe in assuming that their action was a prime factor in bringing about the stagnation of the Jewish communities there. Their spiritual and cultural circumstances, both internal and external, led to their decline; but the part they played in preserving the continuity of the Jewish community in Erez Yisrael throughout the darkest periods of its history has to be set down to their credit.

## II

In the course of time, there arose a secular Messianic movement which, understandably, dissociated itself from the Jewish religion and its traditions. This was the Zionist Socialist movement, and it inadvertently made use of concepts drawn from the world of religious experience, such as *aliyah* (in the Zionist sense "migration to Erez Yisrael") and *kibbutz galuyot*; but it expropriated them from their religious context and gave them a secular connotation. *Aliyah* (literally, "ascent") is no longer connected with the going up of body and soul; it has come to mean the going up of the body only. *Kibbutz galuyot* no longer signifies the ending of our Exile, but the migration of Jews from various countries of the Dispersion to Erez Yisrael. If a particular community terminated its existence by moving *en bloc* to Erez Yisrael, well and good. However, the needs of the moment do not constitute a categorical ideological confrontation over the meaning of *kibbutz galuyot* between Jewish Erez Yisrael and the Exile or Dispersion, but intellectual posturing whose emptiness is evident from the emphasis given to the words.

As a result of the secularization of Zionism and the form taken by its organization, and also of the social structure out of which it grew, it failed to take into account the Jewish communities in the Islamic countries. It should be borne in mind that the growth of Zionism is bound up, not only with the awakening of a national idea drawn from the sources of Jewish identity, but with certain political events concerned with the geopolitical formation of Europe, such as Garibaldi's struggle for the liberation of Italy, the Balkan wars of independence and the awakening of Poland. At the same time, it was conditioned by the growth of anti-Semitic violence in eastern Europe and by the acute manifestations of intellectual anti-Semitism in western Europe, as exemplified by the Dreyfus trial. All these factors contributed to the growth of Zionism and to the form taken by its organization. Hence, its attention was, from the outset, directed to the situation of the Jews in Europe, especially of those in eastern Europe, who were in danger of physical annihilation. We can thus understand why it was that Zionism did not include the Oriental Jewish communities in its reckoning: they

were not in immediate danger of physical destruction, while the danger of cultural assimilation did not exist in their case, though to be sure they had become spiritually impoverished. Nevertheless, in saying that they were not taken into account by Zionism, I do not wish to imply that they were placed outside the orbit of the Jewish people's fate. The "Damasculus Libel," it is true, had occurred some fifty years before Zionism assumed organized form, but it caused the alarm to be sounded throughout the Jewish world to come to the aid of the innocent victims. The Alliance Israelite Universelle devoted itself assiduously to the affairs of the Jews of San'a, in Yemen, from the 1870s onwards. And if we carefully scrutinize the faded pages of history, we shall probably find other noble instances of the unique binding force of the community of Jewish fate. But the examples we have cited are of action taken in times of trouble and stress; in quieter times the distant brothers tend to be forgotten or, at best, are invited to take their place at the foot of the table. In order to make it clear how the task of *kibbutz galuyot* came to be neglected prior to the establishment of the State of Israel it should be added that most of the immigrants from eastern Europe—and they constituted the great majority—were young *haluzim* and mostly unmarried. They were imbued with ideals of cooperation, communal living, and the regeneration of the Jewish people by means of a secular social revolution. I very much doubt whether it is possible to bridge the chasm dividing the secular approach, with all its mobility and its youthful ferment, from the traditional, patriarchal Jewish world in which the family framework remained, as yet, intact.

But once the religious communal framework did collapse, the force that united the various parts of the Jewish people ceased to exist. The *haskalah* ("enlightenment") movement in Europe and the secularization of Jewish life that accompanied it introduced new criteria into the old order of Jewish relationships. The synagogue, the *Bet Midrash*, the liturgy, the *Shulhan Arukh* and the entire Jewish way of life, however much they may have differed in externals from place to place, had been the factors that had linked Jews together throughout the Diaspora; but now their importance had dwindled (for a Jew, no matter where he came from, or according to what ritual he prayed, found himself at home the moment he stepped inside a synagogue anywhere in the Jewish world). What better example could we find than the emissaries who traveled all over the world on behalf of religious institutions in the Holy Land; in every community they visited they found themselves at ease. This is evidenced, for example, by *Even Sapir*, which gives an account of the travels of its author, R. Jacob Sapir, who was born in Lithuania and went to live in Jerusalem and subsequently traveled amongst the Jewish communities of the Orient.

Following, however, the disappearance of these distinctive features



of Jewish life and their replacement, for the time being, by new doctrines, the concept of *kibbutz galuyot* was charged with a different meaning. Since the Zionist ideology was primarily concerned with the up-building of Erez Yisrael, and as that task was at the time understood—and rightly so—as entailing a return to farming and the establishment of villages, and as those village communities were based on a social ideology drawn from secular, socialist sources, those Jews who were unable to meet the requirements of the new society in *Erez Yisrael* were excluded from the immediate sphere of *kibbutz galuyot*, though they were well received on arrival in the country. The same holds true of those European immigrants who adhered to the traditional way of life. Nevertheless, there was a difference. For the immigrants from Europe knew what Zionism was, but had refused to accept it, either on religious or social grounds; whereas the Jews of the Oriental Diaspora had never heard about it at all, and, moreover, Zionism had made no effort at all to reach them. One might argue that Jewish society in the Orient was not yet ready to accept the Zionist ideology, whether on account of its patriarchal structure, or its traditionally religious institutions, or its way of life in general. But whoever adduces such an argument is obliged to accept the fact that Zionism has agreed to many compromises in the course of its history in order to rally the majority of the Jewish people around it, even though those compromises were not always to the benefit of the Zionist movement or its teachings. It may be assumed that, had it occurred to the Zionist leaders that it was necessary to find an appropriate formula for the pattern of life in the countries of the Orient, they would surely have found one. It is, indeed, a cause for regret that such a formula was never found.

During the first decade and the beginning of the second one of this century, Zionism had urgent practical tasks to fulfill in Erez Yisrael. There was a lack of reliable manpower endowed with the endurance and persistence needed to achieve one of its main objectives: the substitution of Jewish for Arab labour in the Jewish areas of settlement—*kibbush ha-avodah* (the “conquest of labour”) as it is called. The enthusiastic youngsters who came from Europe did wonders in this respect; but, as is so often the case with young people, they lacked the necessary staying power, perseverance and fortitude, and there was a great deal of mobility amongst them. The Zionist movement did not have at its disposal a positive element capable of performing the task demanded of it. In 1907, however, it so happened that a few score families of Jews from northern Yemen found their way, unaided, to Erez Yisrael. Their way of life following their arrival, their tenacity in staying where they had settled, their capabilities as manual workers and their capacity to make do with a minimum, drew the attention of certain leaders of the Zionist community. From then on it became a matter of national importance to

bring more such families into the country from Yemen so as to ensure the "conquest of labour" and to strengthen the Jewish working population. The Yemenite Jews, it is true, did not succeed in fulfilling all the hopes that had been placed on them, just as, for that matter, they themselves found that not all of their dreams and longings for redemption had been realised in their new environment. The Jewish population of Erez Yisrael was not yet ready to absorb the immigrants from Yemen, and a suitable way had to be found to stem their influx without causing a spiritual crisis; though this inevitably happened by virtue of the fact that the call went out to them from Erez Yisrael telling them, at least for the time being, to stop coming.

It should not be thought that the case of the Yemenite Jews is unique. We could point to other countries of the Muslim Orient and show how, with one or two minor exceptions, the Zionist movement's contacts with the Jewish communities there had been weak. It is, therefore, valid to say that in the period preceding the establishment of the State of Israel the Zionist movement did not consider the Jews in the Arab countries as constituting a natural reservoir of immigration. Such is the ungrateful way of history: Jewish communities that had fostered messiahs and others wholly dedicated to Erez Yisrael were excluded from the ranks of those admitted to its gates by virtue of a Return to Zion founded upon a new ideology. Those who had watched over the portals of Erez Yisrael from the very first days of the Exile remained silent outside them—and that during the first decades of the national resurgence.

### III

The Jewish people can take the credit that it always tries to come to the aid of communities which are in danger, no matter where. This statement will probably cause the reader to reflect that there hardly ever seems to be a time when the Jewish people is not in distress. It can be urged on behalf of the leaders of the Jewish people and the Zionist people and the Zionist movement that the past half-century in Jewish history was a time of great troubles; hardly a year went by without some calamity occurring, and no sooner did one come to an end than another arose. The Zionist movement and its leaders focussed their attention on the great tragedies in our history, such as the terrible events that followed the outbreak of the Soviet Revolution or the rise of anti-Semitism in eastern and central Europe, and they tried to rescue whom-ever they could from the conflagration. During that period, the Jews in the Islamic countries of the Orient were not yet threatened with annihilation. In Europe, there were pogroms, concentration camps, incinerators and gas-chambers, while the gates of Palestine were closed and only a handful of immigration certificates (issued by the Mandatory Government) were available. The agonising question was, who was to have pri-

ority in the allotment of those certificates? It was, indeed, a terrible ordeal for those who quite literally had to decide who was to be given the chance to go on living and who was to be condemned to die by violence or starvation. Who can presume to sit judgment on those who were faced with such a frightful dilemma?

At that time the concept of *kibbuz galuyot* lost both its religious and secular significance. It was no longer a question of messianism on the one hand, or of territorial concentration on the other, but to dig into the ruins and rescue the lone survivors. For this reason the question of the Oriental Jews was once again temporarily shelved.

Out of the ruins of the Jewish communities destroyed in the Holocaust arose the Jewish State, with the result that the delicate balance that had existed between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East was completely upset. Literally overnight, the Jews in the Arab countries found their lives endangered, and the atmosphere of pogroms was felt in Aden, Cairo and the *mellahs* (ghettos) of North Africa. By a strange coincidence, two complementary factors came into play. On the one hand, the Jews in the Arab countries found the threat of destruction hanging over them, while there was a growing anxiety that their egress might be barred and that they would be held hostage; at the same time, the sources of immigration from eastern and central Europe were drying up. The time had now arrived for anyone who wished to enter Erez Yisrael, and had the possibility of doing so, to make his wish a reality. An operation, on a scale hitherto unprecedented in the entire annals of the Jewish people, was now put in hand, and hundreds of thousands of Jews were evacuated from the Islamic countries. Without "reasoning why," entire dispersions that had a history of two and a half millennia were uprooted and transported to Israel. They left all their property—in some cases of considerable extent—behind them and went. No one could boast with Jacob, "With only my staff I passed over this Jordan and now I am become two camps" (Gen. 32:10). On the contrary, Jews who had belonged to the middle class, upper as well as lower, now suddenly found themselves bereft of all possessions and, for the most part, members of a backward proletariat. People who had occupied a comparatively high position in relation to their own cultural environment suddenly came to be regarded as primitive in the eyes of their new environment. But in their own eyes their migration was charged with a deep religious significance. For them, their prayers, "Gather in our exiles from the four corners of the earth" had been answered. They did not realize how piteous their plight was, for they had actually caught a glimpse of the Messiah. The full extent of their tragic situation had not yet dawned on them, as they were still in the midst of the tremendous upheaval caused by the sudden uprooting from their dark and fearful exile.

So it was that the *kibbuz galuyot* of Oriental Jews was subjected to

its first test. Tens of thousands of Jews were fleeing into *ma-abarot* (immigrant transit camps), consisting of leaking tents and other flimsy structures unfit for human habitation. They spent many months of inactivity, reduced to utter dependence on gigantic soup kitchens, while their human dignity was trampled upon. Nonetheless, all this did not succeed in lowering their pride as sons returning to their ancestral home. But eventually, time did its work and, as always, the flow was followed by an ebb. The loftier the exaltation, the greater the ensuing downward plunge. Joy gave way to mutterings and complaints. Words of reproach were directed heavenwards, and feelings of frustration became widespread. Some could be heard repeating the words of their forefathers: "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that thou hast taken us away to die in the wilderness?" (Exodus 14:11) and "We remember the fish we were wont to eat in Egypt for naught, the cucumbers and the melons. . ." (Numbers 11:5).

Yet, even while they were voicing their complaints about discrimination and unfair treatment, the immigrants from the Islamic countries were becoming transformed into the *haluzim* of the 1950s. The full story of the *moshav* (cooperative village) movement still remains to be told and it has not yet been awarded the accolade it merits. A notable chapter in that story tells how villages of the *moshav* type were planted by the score throughout the country, from north to south and along the frontiers, and peopled by Jews from Muslim countries. The villages in the hills of Galilee and Judea, of the regions of Adullam, Lakhish, Habessor and Ta'anakh rang with the vernaculars of Jews from Morocco, Tunisia, Jerba, Yemen and Iraq. The astonishment of the very soil at this strange encounter soon passed, and as the new farmers bent their backs to their unaccustomed task, it responded to their efforts. The stones of Judea and Galilee became used to the sight of bearded Jews wearing side curls. Many hundreds of young men and women born in villages of the *moshav* and *kibbutz* type, the children of east-European settlers who had migrated during the Second and Third Aliyot, went out to help the newcomers. They taught them the elements of modern social living and farm management. Their efforts were successful, and today those villages are thriving communities. Nevertheless, a large fund of sincere goodwill was dissipated through bickering amongst the political parties, each of which had a past and an ideology of its own in Europe. Zionist socialist parties, Zionist "national" parties and Zionist religious parties contended with one another to secure the votes of the Oriental newcomers. The latter had as yet no idea of the nature of democratic machinery and no notion whatever of the different points of view represented by the various parties whose workers canvassed them assiduously in the immigrant absorption camps and the newly-founded villages. Nor were they over-scrupulous in the means they used to win support:

indeed, these included smearing their opponents, promises of benefits in return for votes and stirring up strife and dissension. Naturally, each party blamed the other for the unfortunate plight of the Oriental newcomers. Overnight, these people were given basic democratic rights by means of the party machines.<sup>2</sup> Without any prior preparation, and certainly with no malicious intent, the social and cultural foundations of the Oriental immigrants were shattered. The Jewish traditions which they had brought with them from their countries of origin seemed, to the younger generation, ridiculous and pitiful in the consciously secular atmosphere of Israel. The culture and way of life that had been preserved in the home were, for the youngsters, a symbol of social retardation—something that every “progressive” person should get rid of as soon as possible. Freedom was taken by them to mean the throwing off of all restraints, and mutual responsibility was understood to imply dependence on official institutions, economically and educationally. The political parties did nothing to arrest this downward course; on the contrary, they hastened it, though not intentionally. Some parties encouraged the secularization of the life of those Oriental communities over which they had influence, without offering them any ideological or spiritual substitute. Others sought to preserve ways of life that were in no way attuned to the realities of the new Jewish existence evolving in the modern State of Israel—ways of life that sought to represent the world in which we live as full of sin, to avoid which the Jew must barricade himself behind a wall of religious precepts. Both the secular and religious parties fostered the emergence of leaders from amongst the Oriental Jews who were narrow-minded, with few exceptions culturally impoverished, and outwardly unprepossessing. Those “leaders” were, in fact, no more than third- or fourth-rate party functionaries. At times, they caused distress to those whom they claimed to represent. They were appointed, rather than elected. This absence of a leadership of stature is a serious matter for *kibbutz galuyot* and for a Jewish society renewing its existence in Erez Yisrael.

#### IV

We frequently hear the assertion that the North African Jews, in particular (it is they who constitute the largest section of Oriental Jewry), came to Israel without their natural leaders—meaning those belonging to the intellectual and professional classes. The latter, so it is said, preferred to go and settle in France or Canada rather than Israel. (We sometimes hear the same sort of thing about the Jews who came

2. Despite the great drawbacks of political party activity amongst the Oriental immigrants, it must be conceded that to some extent the parties helped them in the process of cultural integration, as well as providing them with a satisfactory outlet for communal activity.

from Egypt, though not about those from Yemen or Iraq.) Needless to say, this assertion is baseless, and it bespeaks ignorance or malevolence, or even a wish to avoid coping with a real problem. If we really delve into the question, we shall find that there was not a single community that arrived in Erez Yisrael together with its "natural leaders" or intelligentsia. And if people in those categories did come, it was due to the cruel compulsion of historic circumstances. One can scarcely claim that the Russian Jews, prior to the October Revolution, came with their natural leaders. Unfortunately, they remained behind in Russia or migrated to the United States. Leaders arose in Israel, and solely out of circumstances there. One should bear in mind that Polish Jewry was forsaken by its leaders on the eve of the Holocaust; most of them were out of Poland in connection with their official duties and did not return, or else simply ran away, abandoning their people to their fate (this applies mainly to those with financial resources). Whatever the reason, Polish Jewry remained without leaders during the period of the Holocaust, and the frightful burden fell on the untried shoulders of wonderful young people like Mordecai Anilewitz. The Russian Jews who migrated to Erez Yisrael produced from their midst people who became the leaders of the Yishuv by virtue of their Zionist socialist ideology and their practical achievements as pioneers. On the other hand, the German Jews arrived in Erez Yisrael with an intellectual elite unparalleled in any other Jewish community; but that elite produced very few leaders, either of the German Jewish settlers themselves or of the Yishuv as a whole.

Hence, the formula by which some people would like to find a ready-made explanation for the spiritual impoverishment and lack of leadership of the North African Jews does not stand the test of history in either the recent or more distant past. *The Oriental Jews in Israel have no leadership: that is an incontrovertible fact.* Such a leadership must emerge in Israel itself—out of its scenery and climate and as the result of a struggle between sociopolitical and spiritual institutions. Clearly, this interaction will eventually confer a great blessing upon the country. But before such a leadership emerges, or while it is in the process of emerging, a cultural and spiritual revolution must take place within the Yishuv; and it is this which will lead to a change in values amongst the various Oriental communities. We should not forget that the majority of Jews from Muslim countries had, and still have, no connection with Zionism or Zionist education—for the reasons we have already stated. Zionism implies an entire doctrine concerning the regeneration of the Jewish people in its own land. This doctrine is clearly defined and cannot be brushed aside by addressing to Oriental Jews such phrases as "Whoever comes to live in Israel is a Zionist," or "You may not have been formal Zionists, but you were Zionists at heart." The truth of the matter is that a Zionist is someone who subscribes to the Zionist ideology



as derived from Moses Hess, and especially from Herzl, Syrkin, Borochov and Jabotinsky and their followers. From the ideological point of view, the majority of Oriental Jews are not Zionists and they have never had any Zionist education, either in Israel or in the Diaspora. (Indeed, the same holds good of most Jews from Europe; but that is another matter.)

Zionism is essentially and basically a secular movement rooted in a modern ideological conception of people and homeland. The migration to Israel of Jews from the Oriental countries was due to their ties with Judaism rather than with Zionism. Yet this same Judaism which the Oriental Jews brought with them had itself reached a crisis and retained no more than a mode of life and a collection of customs. Spiritually, the creative powers of Oriental Jewry had waned. In Israel today, the issue of Jewishness has become very acute, and the question "Are we Jews?" or "Are we still Jews?" is relevant. Our attitude to Judaism, positive or negative, will determine the nature of the experiment that we term *kibbutz galuyot*. There are two factors that hold us together in Israel today. The one is the "biological" will to survive, namely, the necessity to protect ourselves against physical destruction. The second is our emotional attachment to our Jewish heritage, an attachment which is becoming constantly weaker with the rise of new generations of Jews born in Israel, who have grown up in an atmosphere which is free, independent and uncomplicated in its attitude to the outside world. As long as our Jewish society in Israel continues to be built up on the foundation of technology regarded as ideology, which is also marked by obvious indications of status value, there remains the danger that *kibbutz galuyot* will lose its original meaning and become far removed from both its remoter Jewish past and its more recent Zionist context. If our society in Israel is built upon spiritual and ideological foundations, according primacy to such concepts as justice, truth, altruism, honesty, work as a creative experience, the defense of human freedom everywhere—ideological foundations that allot supremacy to beauty, love and uprightness, while regarding technology as only a means—it may achieve notable results; but it will be far from being unique in promoting such values. In a society adopting such foundations, the concept of *kibbutz galuyot* will also acquire the non-technical sense of the "fusion of immigrant groups." For some unknown reason, it is within Jewish society in Israel that there is growing up a new mythology centered around technology and science. Like every mythology, it has a grain of truth in it, but it contains many elements of falsehood. It is, indeed, strange that the descendants of historic Judaism, which so successfully escaped from myth and consciously obliterated it, should now be creating one which causes them to be further removed from their Jewish destiny instead of closer.

As long as the myth of science and technology continues to exist (it is to be regretted that I have to yoke them together here, for the pos-



sector of a technological culture is no more than a Sorcerer's Apprentice), the Jews of Oriental provenance will find themselves on the bottom rung of the ladder. True, this may be only a temporary situation, but it is one that is liable to last somewhat longer than a nation can afford to wait. This does not mean that scores, maybe hundreds or even several thousands, may not succeed in forcing their way into the technological and administrative elite. But in so doing, they solve only their own personal problem, not that of their community as a whole. A life based on, and bound up with, values will help to bring the different sections of the population closer together by eliminating the artificial gap that exists at present and will remove the threat of Levantinism that hangs over our Jewish existence.

## V

This spiritual revolution, as we have already stated, depends upon both sides: those who represent the Western, American-type technological culture and the members of the Oriental communities. It depends on how much the former are prepared to display open-mindedness, readiness to make concessions to their Oriental co-nationals, willingness to forego a little of their standard of living and the recognition that the fear lest their places in the social stratification may be "taken over" is baseless. The higher the standard of living and cultural *niveau* of the members of the Oriental communities rises, the more numerous and varied will be the creative opportunities open to the Jews of Israel as a whole. I do not think that one man's progress has to be achieved at his neighbor's expense: they should rather work their way up side by side. Let me stress once again: the scaling of the social ladder, e.g., promotion in the public service—indeed, in all spheres of life—also involves certain concessions: it certainly does not have to be at anyone's expense, unless possibly at the expense of the ungifted.

At the same time, it must be stated categorically that what is lacking in the members of the Oriental communities themselves is a capacity for frank, open and courageous self-criticism. They have no Yosef Hayyim Brenner, no Mendeleh Mokher Sefarim, no Mikhah Yosef Berditchevsky. They never produced from their midst anyone like those who discovered all the degradation and backwardness of Jewish life in Eastern Europe; they failed to realize that all shortcomings have to be fearlessly and ruthlessly exposed. For without self-criticism there is no point in demanding the righting of specific wrongs or the redressing of grievances. No complaints about discrimination or unfair treatment will carry weight unless they are accompanied by searching self-criticism; for it must be emphasized strongly that decadence and ugliness are to be found among the Oriental communities. There is a corrupt communal leadership (al-

though there are individual exceptions, for we find some outstanding men amongst them endowed with sterling qualities and a high degree of culture). There is a lack of culture and a great deal of stridency. There is an inverted scale of values. In short, there is a great deal wrong with the Oriental communities that has to be put right.

The first necessities are searching self-criticism, proudly meeting such challenges as education and culture, adopting the right order of priorities and, above all, a readiness on the part of the Oriental Jews to make a start and to try to solve some of their own problems by their own efforts. When they have taken these preliminary steps they will at last be on the road to *kibbuz galuyot*. Admittedly, the Oriental Jews are not capable—not through any intellectual shortcoming on their part, but purely for lack of material means—of solving the considerable body of their problems that calls for vast financial resources. Society must see to it that these are justly and properly allocated; but this does not absolve the Oriental Jews of the obligation to make an effort on their own part to achieve equality and dignity.

### *Epilogue*

I realize that I have not exhausted the subject, nor have I said all that was on my mind. As is so often true in writing, what is planned is more extensive than what can be said. I have not fulfilled my responsibility towards the topic. I know that I shall not satisfy the desires of either the emigrants from Europe or of those who came from the Oriental communities. There may even be some who will interpret my words inappropriately. But he who has a love for Israel in his heart, and he who is genuinely concerned for the good of the People of Israel, must tell the truth as it appears to him, in an attempt to probe and to understand, to probe and to heal the maladies of Israeli society which is full of self-satisfaction, which is full of self-righteousness and which is so lacking in patience towards those who criticize it. If only it were possible to realize, in our day, the words of the prayer, "And they shall all become as one to do Thy will with a perfect heart. . ."

# *The Israeli Woman*

ANNABELLE YUVAL

WHO IS THE WOMAN IN ISRAEL? IS SHE THE laboratory technician engaged in cancer research? Is she the mechanic employed in the Israel Airplane Industries, producing the Arava? Is she the soldier on duty somewhere in Sinai? Is she a member of the Senior Citizens Club rolling bandages for a hospital? Is she the housewife, busily engaged in caring for her brood? She is all of these and many more.

## POPULATION STATISTICS

On the night between May 19 and May 20, 1972, census takers counted 3,124,000 persons permanently residing in Israel, including those in the Administered Territories (Israeli citizens only), and those who stayed abroad uninterruptedly for less than one year before the census date. Also included were potential immigrants (27,000), and temporary residents who had been in Israel for one year or more up until the census date. A full breakdown of the statistical data will not be ready for months, but the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Prime Minister's Office provided the following figures on the topic with which we are concerned.

### *Proportion of males and females*

Of the 3,124,000, approximately 2,600,000 are Jews. The overall proportion of males to females shows 1,009 males to every 1,000 females, but when we analyze the figures by age-groups, we see some startling differences. In the age-grouping of 30-44, there are fewer men: 943 to every 1,000 women, or almost 6% more women. For the 45-64 age group, there are 4% more females. From the age of 15 years and up, there are 890,900 males for 897,000 females (Jews only). For the non-Jews, the overall figures are 4.2% more males, but in the important age-grouping of 30-44 years, it is equal.

### *Number of Persons in Family Units*

The average family, considering the entire population, consists of 4.2 persons. The average for the Jews is 3.9 and for the non-Jews, 6.6. More than 59,500 Jewish women have 7 or more in the family unit, while more than 100,000 have 6 or more.

If we analyze the population by country of origin of the head of the family (male), of those hailing from the Middle Eastern area, 20% have 7 or more in the unit; 31% have 6 or more. Those coming from

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European-American countries present a different picture, with 1.2% with 7 or more and 3.5% with 6 or more. In Sabra families, 4.8% have 7 or more persons in the family unit, with 9.2% comprising 6 or more. (These are figures for *all* families, including non-Jews.)

But if we look at the data for the Jewish families alone, we see lower averages. The Middle Eastern figure is 4.6 persons per family unit; that of the Sabra 3.4 and that of the European-American 2.8. The longer a family is in Israel, the fewer children are reared.

### *Marriage Age*

In 1971, 28,403 women got married in Israel; of these, 25,600 were Jewish. 2,400 women were divorced (2,250 were Jewish), and there were 86,000 births (65,500 Jewish). Of these, 4,100 were in families now comprising 7+ children. The average age at marriage was 25 years in 1952, in 1960 the figure was 24, and in 1970 it was 23.6. These figures were for all marriages. The average age for first marriages was 22.8 in 1952, 22.1 in 1960, and 21.8 in 1970. Obviously, the marriage age is becoming progressively lower.

The minimum age for marriage, as set by law, is 17, with severe penalties for its violation.

### *Life Expectancy*

In 1950, the average woman reached an age of 69.5 years, the man 66.3. In 1960, the women lived to 73.5 and the men to 70.7. For 1971, the figures are 73.7 and 70.5 respectively. This depicts the greater number of females in the older age groups over males, as we saw previously.

When we glance at the infant death rate, we notice a huge discrepancy between Jews and non-Jews, that of the former being 18.6 and the latter 37.7.

### *Average Family Income and Possession of Durable Goods*

In 1971, the income for the average Jewish urban family was I£ 12,900.

Also, in 1971, amongst 717,000 Jewish families, 86.3% possessed a gas cooking unit; 36.4% an electric unit (this was usually a baking oven, in addition to a top gas burner); 96.4% owned a refrigerator; 32% a mixmaster; 49% a washing machine; 36% a sewing machine; 41% a telephone; 23% a vacuum cleaner; 6% an air conditioner; 63.5% a television set; 90% a radio; 20% a private automobile; and 30% a camera.<sup>1</sup>

1. All the data quoted up until this point were given by the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Prime Minister's Office, and have been published in the Statistical Abstract of 1972.

It can be stated, therefore, that amongst Jewish families in Israel, the standard of living compares quite favorably with many European countries in terms of income, housing and ownership of durable (consumer) goods. Acquisition of new housing for immigrants, newly-married couples, and the like, does present a problem, since most housing must be purchased and, up until now, the supply has been greater than the demand and the cost has risen appreciably. Of all couples who were married in 1970, 16% were still living with parents in the following year.

### *Housing Density*

Amongst Jewish families, 7.4% have three or more persons residing per room in living quarters. 3% have 4 or more persons residing per room in living quarters.

## LEGISLATION PROMULGATED IN ISRAEL AFFECTING WOMEN

On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was declared, and in the Declaration of Independence, which was the first act of the State, complete equality of social and political right was granted to all its inhabitants, irrespective of religion, race or sex. But this was only a Declaration and, therefore, had no legal status. To correct this, the *Women's Equal Rights Law, 5711-1951* was enacted, stating that:

1. A man and a woman shall have equal status with regard to any legal proceeding; any provision of law which discriminates, with regard to any legal proceeding, against women as women, shall be of no effect.<sup>2</sup>

2. A married woman shall be fully competent to own and deal with property as if she were unmarried; her rights in property acquired before her marriage shall not be affected by her marriage.

3. (a) Both parents are the natural guardians of their children; where one parent dies, the survivor shall be the natural guardian.

2. The right of a married woman to have her income tax assessed separately was brought up before the Israel Supreme Court. The case was *Lubinsky v. Income Tax Assessing Officer*. Section 23 of the Income Tax Ordinance provides that the income of a married woman living with her husband shall be taxed jointly with that of her husband except when obtained "by her personal exertions in any trade, business, profession or vocation, or as remuneration for work." This provision was challenged in the Supreme Court on the ground that a married woman may not be denied that right to be assessed separately, this right being guaranteed by the "Women's Equal Rights Law," 1951, section 1 of which provides that "any provision of law which discriminates, with regard to any legal act, against women, as women, shall be of no effect." The Supreme Court held unanimously that there was nothing discriminatory against women in Section 23 of the Income Tax Ordinance. But according to Doris Lankin, in essence, for income tax purposes, there is discrimination against married women. (*Biennial Survey of Israel Law, 1961-1963*, p. 116.) Also, a working woman cannot deduct the cost of domestic help from her income tax.

Mrs. Lankin also states that in claims in torts between spouses, a woman who is separated (but not divorced) from her husband may not bring a claim in tort against him. This is not equality before the law. It is unreasonable and purposeless (*Ibid.*, p. 120).

(b) The provisions of subsection (a) shall not derogate from the power of a competent court or tribunal to deal with matters of guardianship over the persons or property of children with the interest of the children as the sole consideration.

4. re inheritance, (has been superceded by Law of Inheritance of 1965, and will be dealt with later on).

5. This Law shall not affect any legal prohibition or permission relating to marriage or divorce.

6. This Law shall not derogate from any provision of law protecting women as women.

7. All courts shall act in accordance with Law; a tribunal competent to deal with matters of personal status shall likewise act in accordance therewith; unless all the parties are eighteen years of age or over and have consented before the tribunal, of their own free will, to have their case tried according to the laws of their community.

8. The Criminal Code Ordinance, 1936, shall be amended as follows:

(a) Paragraph (c) of the proviso to section 181 is repealed:

(b) the following section shall be inserted after section 181:

181A. Where the husband dissolves the marriage against the will of the wife without a judgement of a competent court or tribunal ordering the wife to dissolve the marriage, the husband is guilty of a felony and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years.

9. The Minister of Justice is charged with the implementation of this Law.

### *1949 Election Law*

There is a universal suffrage clause in this enactment, which allows all women, irrespective of whether they are Jews, Moslems, or Christians, to vote or to be vested upon. A woman can be elected to the Parliament, or can even be a Prime Minister. This law of universal suffrage has been one of the most remarkable features in the development of Arab women in Israel. This, and the fact that there is a wide-spread educational system available to Arab girls, has created a real revolution among Arab women in Israel, in contradistinction to the Arab women in the surrounding countries.<sup>3</sup>

### *Nationality Law, 1952*

Women have the same rights and duties as men. The Law provides neither for acquisition of Israeli nationality nor loss thereof by marriage. A child born of either a mother or a father who is an Israeli national is automatically an Israeli national by birth.

### *Personal Status*

Personal status in Israel is relegated to the religious communities. Hence, there is selective discrimination against the woman in matters of marriage and divorce, as these are under the exclusive jurisdiction of

3. D. R. Elston, *Israel—The Making of A Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 59.

the religious court. There is no civil marriage or divorce in Israel. Under Jewish law, the divorce has to be given by the husband to the wife, although she must be in agreement. On the other hand, she cannot ask him for a divorce. This can be a hardship, for instance, in the case where a man is insane and committed to an institution, or jailed for life, or has deserted his family and, therefore, cannot fulfill his duties as a husband. The woman has no way out of this unbearable situation. Women cannot testify in a rabbinical court, but there can be women lawyers. Custody of the sons of a separated couple is given to the father.

Many very difficult situations have been brought about by inflexible adherence to the Rabbinical Code, and there is much opposition in the community to these problems, as well as to the problems of the *mamzerim* and *halizah*. These and other outmoded and rigid religious laws have made such an impact on the community that quite a storm has arisen and there is much public pressure for the introduction of civil marriage, especially in hardship cases.<sup>4</sup> Just recently, the Independent Liberal Party in Israel decided to introduce such legislation into the Parliament, with its leaders announcing that it is just a question of timing.

Emancipation of the woman can be called a legal reality, but much depends on the traditions and customs of the different communities. The ultra-Orthodox and the Oriental groups may not avail themselves of all the legal equalities, e.g. voting.

#### *Inheritance Law of 1965*

This law is a departure from both the Jewish law and from the Mandatory ordinance which it replaces. A person may will his property exactly as he wishes. A wife, however, is entitled to receive what is specified in her marriage contract (*ketubah*) before the will is executed. The spouse, children and parents of the deceased are entitled to maintenance from the estate if they cannot support themselves. A couple in a common law marriage have the same rights of inheritance as long as neither of them is married to any other person.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Capacity and Guardianship Law, 5722-1962*

"Before the enactment of this law, the courts, when faced with a question of guardianship, were forced to seek the solution in the religious laws of the various communities. Now, for the first time, a unified secular law of guardianship has been enacted. Its provisions correspond in the main with those of Jewish Law, but with certain outstanding differences. The most important of these is that the new law gives women equal rights and duties. Thus, the mother, and not only the father, is

4. Shulamith Schwartz Nardi, *Israel Today, Women in Israel* (Jerusalem: Israel Digest, pamphlet #13, 1969), p. 23.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 14.



the natural guardian of a minor child and has the duty to take care of its needs. And the difference is that the new law, unlike Jewish Law, distinguishes only slightly between matters pertaining to the person of a ward and those pertaining to his property. Special circumstances—such as the estrangement of parents and the death of one parent—are given special treatment by the law. If the parents are separated, they may agree between them as to who should act as the guardian of the minor, in whose custody the minor should be and what rights the other parent has. Any such agreement is subject to the approval of the District Court, which may, in the absence of agreement, decide the issue of guardianship and custody at its discretion, with the proviso that children up to the age of six shall remain with their mother, unless there are special reasons for directing otherwise. In a saving clause, it is provided that the law shall not affect any law relating to marriage or divorce and shall neither add to nor derogate from the jurisdiction of the religious tribunals.”<sup>6</sup>

### *Maintenance of Children*

When a couple is divorced, there is no compulsion for the man to pay alimony, but the court attempts to persuade him to pay some maintenance for any children. The National Insurance Institute now pays all alimony to divorced women whose husbands do not pay,<sup>7</sup> and the Institute will try to find the delinquent husband in the hope of getting the money back, although payments to the woman will continue whether or not the husband is traced.

## SOCIAL WELFARE LEGISLATION

### *National Insurance Law, 5714–1953*

#### Part I: Old-age insurance and survivors' insurance

##### Chapter 2: Old Age Insurance

#### 4. The following are dependents of an insured person for the purposes of this chapter:

- (1) his wife, provided that—
  - (a) she has borne him a child or has been his wife for at least one year; and
  - (b) she has attained the age of 45 years or has with her a child of the insured person or is incapable of supporting herself; and
  - (c) she is mainly supported by the insured person, or the insured person owes her maintenance under a judgment of a competent court and she has no other source of income sufficient for her livelihood.

6. Doris Lankin, *Biennial Survey of Israel Law, 1962–63* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1964), p. 21.

7. *The Jerusalem Post*, Nov. 19, 1972.

### Part III: Maternity Insurance

27. A woman insured under part one and the wife of a person insured under part one are insured persons under this part.
28. An insured person who is an employee or a self-employed person shall be paid by the Institute maternity allowance in accordance with the Seventh Schedule.
  1. Maternity allowance shall be paid in respect of the period, not exceeding 12 weeks, for which an insured person interrupts her work by reason of pregnancy or delivery.

The effects of these laws make for quite a socially advanced country. The pregnant woman can work throughout her pregnancy and cannot be fired. In addition to the three months' maternity leave (paid by the National Insurance Institute), hospitalization is also paid by this Institute. The Knesset Labour Committee decided recently that maternity hospitals are compelled to keep the mother for a minimum of four days after childbirth. She will also get her maternity allotments while still in the hospital. A nursing mother is allowed time off from work to go home to nurse her baby. The woman is assured of her position after a year's leave. In a most recent case brought before the Tel Aviv District Labour Court, these rights were upheld. El Al Airline, in its work contract, had three clauses which, according to the Labour Court, were discriminatory against women. They were:

"A stewardess who became pregnant was put on immediate unpaid leave and then fired when she gave birth," and "A stewardess who married a steward or air crewman without notifying El Al was immediately fired."<sup>8</sup> (The third clause deals with employment and will be discussed later.)

### *Age for Pension and Pension Rights, Social Security Payments*

The legal pensionable age for women is 60 years, but for men, 65. If a civil servant dies, his wife will not get his pension if she is also a civil servant and continues to work for the government. If the woman dies, the man need not quit his job in government service in order to qualify for his pension. Israel Social Security will not pay a man the benefits of his dead wife (even though the wife had worked and paid social security). On the other hand, a working wife does receive the social security benefits accruing to her as a widow.

## EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN

### *Employment of Women Law, 5714-1954*

1. The Minister of Labour may, by regulations, prohibit or limit the employment of a female worker in any specific work, production process or workplace, employment in which is likely, in his opinion, to be especially prejudicial to the health of a female.
2. (a) A female worker shall not be employed at night.  
 (b) "Night" means a period of eleven hours, including the hours between 11 P.M. and 6 A.M.

8. *The Jerusalem Post*, Nov. 24, 1972.

- (c) The prohibition imposed by subsection (a) does not apply to the employment of a female worker—
- (1) in State services which the Minister of Labour has specified in regulations after satisfying himself that night work in such services by a female worker is essential to the State and is not likely to be especially prejudicial to the health of a female.
  - (2) in places where sick persons or invalids are tended, in convalescent homes and in institutions for the care of old persons or children.
  - (3) in newspaper work, except the printing of newspapers.
  - (4) in restaurants and hotels and in public entertainment within the meaning of the Public Entertainment Ordinance 15.
4. The Minister of Labour may permit the employment of a female worker at night—
- (1) in a period in which a state of emergency exists in the State by virtue of a declaration, etc.
  - (2) in production processes involving material likely to deteriorate rapidly, if night work is required to prevent certain deterioration of the material.
  - (3) shift work.
6. (a) Where a female worker is shortly to give birth, her employer shall grant her maternity leave and shall not employ her during such leave.
- (b) Maternity leave is twelve weeks, of which six weeks or less, as the worker may wish, shall be before the estimated date of delivery, and the remainder after delivery.
7. (a) A female worker who has had a miscarriage may be absent from work for one week after the miscarriage, or, if a physician certifies that the state of her health subsequent upon the miscarriage necessitates a longer absence, such period, not exceeding six weeks, as the physician may determine.
9. (a) An employer shall not dismiss a female worker during the maternity leave or during her absence from work.
- (b) An employer shall not dismiss a female worker who is pregnant though not yet on maternity leave . . . (does not apply to temporary work).

### *Women and Employment*

In 1971, of 1,800,000 Jews over the age of 14, 935,100 were women, of whom 32.5% were employed in the civilian labor force. 57% were fully employed, 32% were partly employed; 7% were temporarily absent from work (maternity leave, etc.), and 4.3% were listed as unemployed.

The breakdown for the total population as to the category of work in which people were employed is as follows:<sup>9</sup>

	Women	Men
Professional, Scientific and Technical Areas	26 %	11.7%
Administrative, Executive, Managerial and Clerical	23 %	15.4%
Trade, Agents and Salespeople	7.4%	7.8%
Farmers, fishermen (Kibbuzim and moshavim)	6.7%	9.7%
Transportation and Communication	less than 1%	7.2%
Construction, quarries, mines, crafts, factories	14.7%	39.9%
Services, sports and recreation	21.2%	8.3%

9. *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, #23 (Jerusalem Central Bureau of Statistics, 1972).

There are also women who assist their husbands in their shops and do not receive compensation. It is readily seen that there is a great differentiation as to types of employment amongst males and females.

### *Job Opportunities: The Reality*

Though, in theory, every position is open to women, and presently the Prime Minister is proof that women can achieve the top role in the State, the statistics show that only about 5% of those employed in the civil service are in the upper echelons of government ministries. The percentage of academically trained women in the government service is higher—approximately 17%—since it includes the many lawyers employed. (Teachers are not included in these figures, mainly because they are employed by the local governments.)

The percentage of married women working is directly proportional to the level of education which they have attained. 25% of the married women with 8 years or less of schooling hold jobs, while 61.2% of those with some college education work, and 65% of women college graduates are employed.<sup>10</sup>

There may be a simple reason why so few women are found in the key administrative and managerial positions of the government (or outside the government, for that matter). Most women, after they marry, cease their employment for a period of several years in order to raise a family. It is extremely difficult for most of them to return to work after only the one year's maternity leave, especially if they have been in higher positions, which often require, among other things, irregular hours of work. The country does not have proper facilities for the working woman with young children, and appropriate services must be established on a national basis: e.g., day-nurseries, school luncheons, services and stores to be kept open longer hours. In addition, there should be possibilities for part-time work and for more elastic work hours. The Government, after opening its first day-care center as an employer, announced that it will prepare 20,000 more places within the next three years.<sup>11</sup> If such programs are not organized to a sufficient extent, women will not finish university, nor will they return to work after child-bearing. The six-to-seven-year cessation is a critical point in a woman's career and advancement. She must be extremely strong in character and in physical prowess to be able to do both, according to sociologist Dr. Rivka Bar-Yosef. The problem is how to harness and/or adopt a law for the benefit of women as mothers and employees.

There are also areas where women have been openly discriminated against in terms of employment. In the El Al case mentioned previously, the third clause struck down was that "stewardesses were barred from

10. *Ibid.*, p. 310.

11. *The Jerusalem Post*, Sept. 21, 1972.

promotion to the jobs of steward-purser and senior purser." What is interesting in this case is that it is completely counter to the tradition of this country as exemplified in the Old Yishuv. Early in the 20th century Jewish women began to take an active part in public and communal life. They joined in debates on public issues and left no doubt about their desire and ability for responsible citizenship. There was no opposition from the men in Hashomer, in the Teachers' Association, or in the kibbutzim. From the beginning, women enjoyed full equality. As educational opportunities were the same, women are to be found today in all institutes of higher learning, but in the Parliament they are currently represented by only eight women. Others are prominent in cultural and artistic endeavors. Women's organizations and non-party groups do important work in social service—in nurseries, clubs, schools. Among these are WIZO, Hadassah, Moeẓet Hapoalot, Mizrahi.<sup>12</sup> But the emphasis has changed; you do not get the feeling that women are the pulse of the country, that they really have a say in its running, that they are equally represented in the establishment.

### *Equal Pay for Equal Work: A Fiction*

In 1971, women earned 25% less than men per average work-hour. This was an improvement compared with 1970, when the difference was 27%, but the gap was still considerable. Moreover, the different pay per work-hour is only part of the story. The survey revealed that women worked, on the average, 18% fewer hours a week than male workers, and also eight fewer weeks a year. As a result, weekly earnings of women were 39% less than those of men, while annual wage incomes of female workers were 44% smaller than those of male workers. The wage differential was not the same in all economic branches. In the public services, the women's annual income was only  $\frac{1}{3}$  less than that of their male colleagues, and the gap in wage per hour was only 10%, but in industry, females earned 45% less than men per hour, and 52% less per year. The gap is even greater in agriculture and commerce, though the comparison there is most open to criticism because women are, as a rule, employed in different jobs than are men.<sup>13</sup>

Very often an office or a public institution will discriminate against a woman employee and label her as "secretary," while the man doing exactly the same work is designated "head of a bureau," so that his grade is automatically jumped from 24–26 to 32–34.<sup>14</sup> Because of such cases, many women are fearful of applying for such positions and do not even enter bids.

12. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. XVI, p. 627.

13. *The Jerusalem Post*, Sept. 27, 1972.

14. *Shurot* (Clerical Union Monthly), p. 22.

*Arab Women in Employment*

As there has been increased education for Arab women, there has also been an increased awareness that the Arab female can find employment outside of the home. During the last year, 2,500 Israel Arab women found permanent work. This figure represents the largest number of Arab women to be taken into the labor force in a one-year period. In the past year, 16 factories were set up in Arab and Druze areas and they are employing 900 women. Most of these plants were built by local investors with the assistance of the Ministry of Commerce.<sup>15</sup>

The Druze object to a nursing career for their women, as they consider it a violation of their traditions and religion. Some of them still refuse to let their wives deliver their babies in maternity wards because they fear that male doctors, not midwives, might assist them. Therefore, the Health Ministry has lately opened courses for Arab and Druze girls to become nurses, with the aim of posting them to hospitals when they graduate. The Druze, who object to their women leaving home to take up any kind of career, say they prefer them to be treated by Arab or Jewish women doctors or nurses.<sup>16</sup>

*Compulsory Army Service for Women (Defense Service Law of 1949)*

Unmarried women between the ages of 18 and 26 are required to join the defense services of the State of Israel for a period of two years. (This has since been amended to twenty months, and only those who register for special courses have their service extended, usually for a period of an additional four months). Women with religious scruples against army service may be exempted. At the completion of their service, all childless women remain in the Reserve Army until the age of 34.

There is a tradition in the country for women to participate in the defense of the Jewish community. Women have always played such a role in the Yishuv. In World War II, 3,000 of them volunteered in the British Army. There were women who parachuted into occupied Europe with the main purpose of assisting Jews to escape from the Nazis, and there were fighting women in the Palmah and Haganah during the 30's, 40's and The War of Independence. But the women soldiers in Israel's Defense Forces today do not fight. Their duties include clerical, medical, housekeeping and communication work. They also pack parachutes, teach, and promote cultural activities in the development areas.<sup>17</sup> In general, the girls want to serve and they do humanize the army.

The majority of both men and women who have been conscripted since 1949 have been new immigrants, and the Army has probably been

15. *Israel Digest*, Oct. 13, 1972.

16. *The Jerusalem Post*, Sept. 26, 1972.

17. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. XVI, p. 627.

the most effective instrument for the social and economic integration of these young people. They learn the Hebrew language, and are trained in citizenship. Men and women may also choose to serve in Nahal, the Pioneering Fighting Youth, which is a combination of agricultural training and army service and discipline. After three years (two for the girls), the youngsters may decide to become full-fledged members of a frontier settlement or establish a new one.<sup>18</sup>

*Effect of Compulsory Education Law, Adult Literacy Programs and Western Culture on the Oriental Woman*

As was mentioned previously, the compulsory education law has revolutionized the world of the Arab and Druze women. But the impact on the women from the Oriental countries has been even greater. In their native countries, it was not felt important for a girl to be literate, while in Israel, new vistas have been opened up for her by her going to school. Her mother has participated in the adult literacy programs, under the auspices of the girl soldiers or the women's volunteer organizations. The latter, through their community and social welfare programs, have instructed the mother in modern methods of home management, hygiene, child-rearing and the like. The rise in the standard of living has brought into her home all the time-saving modern appliances. Her role in the family and vis-à-vis her husband is also evolving. His is not the only opinion that counts. She is even limiting her family to be more in keeping with her Sabra or Western sisters.

*Women's Liberation Movement*

Such a group has been organized in Haifa and an attempt is being made to expand throughout the country. In the meantime, there are women in various places who are campaigning against "male discrimination against women." One of these is Mrs. Aliza Tamir, the head of the Histadrut's Salaried Women's Division, which is part of the Clerical and Public Employees Union. With a membership of 70,000, it is the largest trade union in the country. Mrs. Tamir was the driving force behind the fight to end discrimination in the El Al contract, while within the Histadrut she has been fighting for greater representation of women on the Central Committee and has just won her case.<sup>19</sup> She had threatened to call a counter-conference.

Mrs. Golda Meir, the only woman ever to have served in the cabinet of the State of Israel, is somewhat negative towards the Women's Lib movement. In an interview with an Italian journalist, as reported in *Ma-ariv* of November 11, 1972, she stated that the fact that she was a woman did not stop her from her political career. She always worked

18. Elston, *Op. cit.*, pp. 76, 78.

19. *The Jerusalem Post*, Dec. 5, 1972.



with men and they had a positive relationship towards her. But to be a woman is harder, more tiring, more painful. There are, therefore, biological restrictions that impede complete equality. Child-bearing and child-rearing leave their toll. She herself always felt guilty that she had left her children so often. In an interview with *Time Magazine*, Mrs. Meir said that women will always be at a personal disadvantage and that no one can help a mother in public life . . . her feelings will never be the same as those of a man or a father in public life. Mrs. Meir is an exception in Israel's public arena, and there are very few women anywhere in Israel's political scene approaching her stature. There are no women on the Supreme Court, though there are many women judges in the lower courts. Recently, Mrs. Renana Guttman was appointed the Director-General of the State Controller's Office, but there is no woman who directs any major corporation.

### CONCLUSION

Israel as a developing nation, with a constant need for full employment, must assure the proper status, working conditions, and salary to the woman who wishes to be employed. She must not be discriminated against simply because she is a woman. There must be communal arrangements for her children—day nurseries for the younger ones and longer school days with hot luncheons for the older ones. She should be able to deduct from her income tax the amount which she must spend on domestic help.

The problems relating to personal status must be resolved, especially those of marriage and divorce. Many feel that with the change in the Chief Rabbinate, with younger men like Rabbi Goren and Rabbi Yoseph at the helm, a more liberal attitude may ensue. Only time will tell. The Langer case may be unique. In any event, it is really the basic attitude of men towards women that will be the deciding factor. Do the males really want the females competing with them outside of the home, instead of just remaining by the fireside, raising the children and serving their husbands?

# *Women in Israel*

JUDITH NEULANDER ELIZUR

## WOMEN'S LIB HAS NOT CAUGHT ON IN ISRAEL.

There are good and sufficient reasons for this suspicion of foreign imports (drug-taking is another that is looked at askance): the women's liberation movement is viewed as an alien growth, not an organic indigenous development. For one thing, there is lacking that large body of overeducated, underemployed, middle-class females to serve as the breeding ground for unrest, an element of the population which does exist in the United States. While few would query the drive for equal rights, the anti-masculine, anti-child and faintly Lesbian overtones of most women's liberation pronouncements collide head-on with the norms, not only of traditional and religious circles in Israel, but of its modern secular society as well.

Thus, the composite self-image of the Israeli woman is far more conservative, "square," if you will, than that of her "liberated" sisters abroad, and, from all current indications, likely to stay that way. To the extent that generalizations have any accuracy, the average Israeli woman sees her primary role as home-maker and mother. She sees herself as helpmate and partner to her husband in many areas, but views him as the chief provider and king-pin of the family unit. Work before marriage outside the home is accepted in most circles, and army service for girls is a civic obligation (objected to only by the extremely Orthodox). Still, the Israeli female sees no need at present to mount the barricades, although in the implementation of equal rights there are numerous areas where changes are in order.

In point of fact, wide differences in educational aspirations, professional attainment and social status characterize women in the various *edot*, or communities. Israel is still in the process of absorbing waves of new immigrants: until the population will become more homogeneous, there will be as many definitions of the proper role of women in society as there are distinctive groups in it. This complexity, this multiplicity of images is the key to any inquiry into the role of women in Israeli society today.

Observers from the outside have not always been kind in their descriptions of the Israeli female. In the now apparently obligatory Israel sequence of the modern Jewish novel, writers such as Mordecai Richler, Philip Roth and Lionel Davidson have all depicted Adam's rib as a sex

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object, varying from extremely attractive to extremely unattractive.<sup>1</sup> Richler's kibbutz member in *St. Urbain's Horseman* is described, for example, as "a burly lady with frizzy black hair, lachrymose eyes and hairy legs," who variously shuffles, complains and laughs dryly, "sunken in bitterness."<sup>2</sup>

Philip Roth's lady lieutenant in the Israel Army is, at least physically, more attractive: Portnoy notes her "green eyes and tawny skin" and is "excited by her small, voluptuous figure nipped at the middle by the wide webbing of her khaki belt." But, alack, "what a determined humorless self-possessed little thing! I don't know if she would allow me to order for her even if I spoke the language." Despite her charms, Portnoy cannot perform, and the lady lieutenant "hisses and angrily puts her uniform back on and leaves." So much for the Israeli woman as emasculator.<sup>3</sup>

Lionel Davidson loves Israel so much that he even likes Tel Aviv: perhaps this explains his more positive attitude to Israeli girls in general, as well as to the heroine of *A Long Way to Shiloh* in particular. As for the species, he writes,

Toughness, self-reliance, qualities greatly prized here, had also struck an echo in the girls. There was a mischievous, tomboyish look about many of them as they passed, army hats cocked modishly over one eye, egg-brown arms around the necks of male and female comrades; a strong impression of matey solidarity.<sup>4</sup>

Shoshana, Davidson's Yemenite heroine (also a lady lieutenant—apparently a dangerous species), was

a precise, delicate, petite little thing, a fine shade of coffee all over, like some figurine of The Arab Maid. Her heart-shaped face supported a small tip-tilted nose and longish doe-like eyes . . . her black hair was straight . . . arms and legs as they should be, khaki shirt suitably filled. The only thing I could see against her was a rather tuned-in look . . . the girl was a thinker.<sup>5</sup>

The hero eventually comes to terms with the presence of Jewish intellect in female guise—satisfactorily physical terms, needless to say.

These "Anglo-Saxon" writers (Richler is Canadian, Davidson, English and Portnoy, sorry, Roth, American) have seen today's Israeli woman as a far cry from the Biblical "woman of valor" or the much maligned "Yiddishe mama." Yet all these images, old and new, are facets of the reality of Israel today. To the "haluzah" of the kibbutzim, the army lieutenant, the exotic Yemenite and the overprotective mother should be

1. Dan Jacobson also belongs in this company, but the hero of the Israel sequence in his novel *The Beginners* never establishes a relationship with a female while he is in Israel; this may or may not have influenced his leaving the country!

2. Mordecai Richler, *St. Urbain's Horseman* (London: Panther Books Ltd., 1972).

3. Philip Roth, *Portnoy's Complaint* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969), pp. 256-7.

4. Lionel Davidson, *A Long Way to Shiloh* (London: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 123.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

added the young working wife, the urban homemaker and the career woman. Together, they yield Ms. Israel in the twenty-fifth year of the State's existence.<sup>6</sup>

\* \* \*

In examining the reality behind these manifold images, three problem areas deserve consideration: the general standard of living and its influence on women; the role played by educated women in the society; and the situation of the vast majority, with a view to emerging trends.

### *I. The rising standard of living and its implications for women*

In many respects, Israel has spent these two and a half decades trying to achieve an American standard of living. In 1948, one could say that there was a fifty-year gap between the two; by 1972, that gap had been narrowed by half. The chief beneficiaries of the improved material standard of living have been women, whose growing liberation from household drudgery has come about in this period. The increase in the number of refrigerators, gas ranges and other appliances has cut across all groups in the population. Some examples of this improvement follow:<sup>7</sup>

— In Israel today, the ice-man no longer cometh. His dripping, unsanitary truck is a memory of the past, with 95.5% of all Jewish families now owning electric refrigerators. (The 1958 figure, after ten years of independence, was only 37.1%). This increase took place despite the shortsighted policy of the men in the Ministry of Finance, who still consider the refrigerator a luxury item for tax purposes. Israel's housewives understood better than did male bureaucrats that proper refrigeration of food could eliminate that scourge of summer weather, dysentery, with its attendant infant mortality and work-days lost to the national economy. They made acquisition of an electric refrigerator the No. 1 item on their list of priorities.

— Twenty-five years ago, most women in Israel were cooking on a primitive kerosene stove called a "primus," a one-burner affair relegated today to camping expeditions. By 1958, 38.2% of all Jewish families were cooking with gas (usually bottled); by 1970, 88.5% had acquired a gas stove.

— Next highest priority apparently has been given by the ladies to the acquisition of a washing machine. Whereas in 1948 this appliance was all but unknown in Israel, and in 1958 only 9.9% of all Jewish families owned one, today they are found in 46.1% of such homes. Interestingly, the percentage is higher among Israel-born families (60.2%) than

6. Fortunately, the most commonly used Hebrew form of address, "*geveret*," denotes both married and unmarried females, so that Israel is spared this particular battle.

7. Unless otherwise specified, all statistics in this article are taken from the *Government of Israel Statistical Abstract of Israel 1971*, published by the Central Bureau of Statistics.

among immigrant families; the lady sabra is no longer interested in boiling the family laundry on a "primus," as was the practice twenty-five years ago.

— The vacuum cleaner has not yet replaced the time-honored method of dragging rugs out on the balcony, where they are hung over the railing and given a good beating to rid them of accumulated dust. Only 22.5% of families have this appliance—but then, wall-to-wall carpeting is not characteristic of Israeli homes. Slightly more widespread is ownership of electric mixers, although only 30.5% of Israel's kitchens were equipped with this item in 1970.

— The dependence of the average Israeli, male and female, on public transportation is probably the greatest difference in living standard today as compared to the United States. Only 15.4% of all families (excluding those in kibbutzim) owned their own private automobile in 1970. This means that the housewife must use the bus to get to stores or to the market, and then bring home her purchases, and the working woman is dependent on it to reach her job.

— As for availability of information and entertainment in the home, 90% of all families in 1970 had a radio of some kind. Television, which was introduced only in 1967, has now reached 60% of the homes in the country. (Many Orthodox families have ideological objections to television and do not permit it.)

Thus, the emerging trend is one of a rapid rise in the degree of mechanization and comfort in the home since 1948. But the Israeli woman still has a good distance to go before she reaches the standard of her American counterpart. Car ownership and home airconditioning (only 4.6% of Israeli families have an airconditioner in the house) are the most striking areas of contrast. It can be said, however, that the impetus to increase its material standard of living (housing, especially) is the most characteristic behavior pattern of the Israeli family today—and the woman of the family is the chief instigator of this material progress.

In order to reach this higher standard of living, a sufficient level of available disposable income must be reached. The consequence of this truism has been an ever-increasing percentage of Israeli women working outside the home. Many of them take jobs to help pay off the mortgage (the vast majority of Israelis are urban apartment dwellers, but virtually all apartments are owned, not rented); the husband's salary suffices for current expenses but not for payment of long-term debts.

In September, 1972, the Minister of Labor, Mr. Yosef Almogi, cited the figure of 329,000 women, between the ages of 14 and 65, as being gainfully employed. 40,000 of them are mothers of children under four years of age. These working women constitute one-third of the total labor force in Israel. Larger numbers of women with children would probably join those already working if there were more facilities available for

child-care, such as day nurseries, which until now have been provided mainly by women's organizations such as Moezet Hapoalot and WIZO. The severe labor shortage has induced the Ministry of Labor to plan places for an additional 20,000 children in the next two and a half years, thus enabling a further growth in the number of women at work outside the home.

The government has also dragged its feet in providing tax inducements for working women, despite the labor shortage. Only minor income tax concessions have been made for working wives. Despite years of campaigning, the Ministry of Finance has not yet been persuaded to permit working women to deduct the cost of employed household help as a legitimate expense. (The stubborn opposition of the Ministry leads one to speculate that the men there really don't want their wives to go out to work.)

Most working women are to be found in fairly unskilled and semi-skilled occupations, such as services, factory work and clerical jobs. As might have been anticipated, 53.4% of those engaged in industry and 49.4% of those in trade had completed only 5-8 years of schooling. There was an equal number of elementary and high-school attenders among women in agriculture and in services. 75.9% of those engaged in clerical work had some amount of secondary education, and 15% some post-secondary schooling. Only one group, the professionals and technicians, had a high level of postsecondary education, 65%. Needless to say, comparative statistics show a higher level for males in every one of these fields, except services.

This lower educational level is part of the reason, but not all of it, for the marked differential in average annual income (approximately 2:1) between men and women in the various categories. The other factor is that women fill the lower-ranking jobs in each field, which carry with them lower salaries. Yet even in jobs where men and women are doing the same work, the differential exists, although under law there should be equal pay for equal work. Tenure and promotion too often are given preferentially to men—the latter due to prejudice against having women in positions of authority over men.

Other legal disabilities exist in regard to pension rights, unemployment insurance and income tax provisions. The slowness with which these distortions have been corrected by the legislative authority is a reflection of the lack of an active women's lobby capable of making its voice heard in the Knesset.

## *II. Wasted talents of university-educated women*

Education statistics for Jewish women in Israel are an eye-opener: in the female population aged 14 and above in 1970, 13.8% had had no schooling at all; 6.8% had from 1-4 years and 30.1% from 5-8 years. An-

other 37.7% had had between 9-12 years of schooling. This means that a university education for women is the privilege of a limited elite, 9.1%. To be sure, the situation for the under-17 age group is far better than for the over-17 group, and better for Israel-born than for immigrants.

The total number of students in institutions of higher learning in the 1969/70 school year was 33,383, of whom 14,456 were women. The undergraduate student body at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and at Tel Aviv University is almost evenly divided between the sexes; at the Haifa Technion, the ratio is about 3½:1 in favor of the men.

Interestingly, of the total bachelors' degrees awarded in 1969/70, approximately half went to women. Comparing this ratio to their share in the undergraduate student body, this would indicate that girls who begin studying for their B.A. usually complete the course. However, of the 6,044 advanced degrees, only 1,594 went to women, and these were mainly masters' degrees in education and related fields, or in science. The proportion of women recipients of doctoral degrees is far lower: thus, for example, the Hebrew University granted 135 Ph.D.'s in 1969/70, of which 18 went to women.

This data would seem to indicate that the educational aspirations of even that minority of women who go to university stop at the B.A. level unless there is some clear professional advantage in continuing to the M.A. (higher salaries for teachers, for example). Not only do very few women students reach the top rung of academic achievement; women are grossly underrepresented on university faculties. At the Hebrew University, for example, only 2% of the full professors are women.

There is little evidence to show that the talents of this highly educated elite are utilized by Israeli society today. A brief survey of the Knesset and of top policy-making posts in the government and the economy reveals an almost total absence of women in any positions of consequence. Golda Meir may be Prime Minister, but she is the exception that proves the rule. Today there are eight women members in the 120-member Knesset. This is the lowest figure since 1948. (The First Knesset had eleven women members.) There are no indications that the Labor Party intends to increase the number of seats traditionally set aside for women (six in all) in the list of candidates it is putting up for the 1973 elections. Nor are Ga'hal or the National Religious Party, which each have one woman representative in the current (Seventh) Knesset, intending to increase their number. Thus, Israel's women will continue to be underrepresented in the national legislature. (It should be noted, parenthetically, that there are no women in the top leadership of any of the political parties or in the Histadrut, let alone new, young faces.)

In the nineteen government ministries, the Prime Minister's Office, the State Controller's office, the Bank of Israel and the Broadcasting Authority, there are perhaps a dozen women, altogether, in top policy-



making positions. There is one Director-General (State Controller's office, as of August 1972), one assistant Director-General (Ministry of the Interior) and a handful of department heads in this exclusive group. Israel has no women ambassadors at present, although there have been two in the past, and the only women in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, apart from secretaries, are all veterans of the first generation of the Ministry. To all intents and purposes, the Israel foreign service is closed to women.

Although females comprise almost the entire teaching staff of the elementary school system, and their proportion in high school staffs is constantly rising, there are no women among the top policy echelon in the Ministry of Education, which supervises these pedagogues. In the Ministry of Health, the only women in top posts deal with nursing services. None of the economic Ministries has a woman in a top policy job. Yet there is no dearth of women economists; those in the civil service are all in lower-ranking positions. Of all the government offices, only the Broadcasting Authority has a high proportion of women as division heads.

As for the Israel Supreme Court, there never has been a female Justice, and apparently there is little likelihood of one. And, of course, there never will be (*has veholilah*) among the *dayanim* of the rabbinical courts, which come under the purview of the Ministry of Religions. These courts deal with all matters of personal status—marriage, divorce, custody, inheritance—on the basis of halakhah. Any suggestion to abrogate the status of the *agunah*, or to do away with *halizah*, or any other antiquated disabilities of women, would be blasphemy in these courts.

(In the courts of the State, as distinct from the rabbinical courts, decisions have been rendered even on matters of personal status when petitioners appeal the latter's decisions. There have been significant rulings in matters of inheritance and custody in which the rights of women have been upheld. Furthermore, there are women judges in the lower courts, both on the district and magistrates level.)

Considering the numbers of women who receive university degrees each year, and the absence of representation of women in policy-making positions in the fields surveyed, the conclusion is inescapable: most women college graduates in Israel do not put their training to use. They may work their way through school, and take a job in the first years of marriage, but then they "retire," to become indistinguishable from their less-educated sisters.

### *III. Life-style of the majority of Israel's women*

When does the home-centered Israeli female marry and how many children does she have? The average age of marriage for single people has declined steadily since 1948. Today's first-time Jewish groom is 25, and his bride, 21.8 years old. More and more marriages, incidentally,

are across lines of countries of origin: the endogamy index has fallen within one decade from 0.78 in 1960 to 0.67 in 1969 and continues to fall. This indicates that between 30–40% of all Jewish marriages today are “mixed” as far as country of birth of the partners is concerned.

Birth rates are clearly related to two factors: education and country of origin. As is the case elsewhere in the world, the less education a woman has, the more children she produces. An Israeli woman in the 25–29 age group without any education already has 4.57 children (average figure), whereas her contemporary with more than high-school education has only 1.93. The difference in number of live births among women with 13-plus years of education according to continent of origin (the *Statistical Abstract* makes a breakdown according to Asia–Africa, Europe–America and sabra) is far smaller than the difference for uneducated women of these categories.

The sabra mother with 13-plus years of education, incidentally, has a larger family than either her equally well-educated contemporary in the Asia–Africa or Europe–America group in the 35–39 age category: 3.28 for sabras, 3.14 for Asia–African and 3.10 for Europe–America. This, however, is the only category in which the sabra figure is highest. Otherwise, the Asia–Africa group always has the highest average number of live births and the Europe–America group the lowest.

The average number of children in the Jewish families of Israel is 2.9 and for non-Jews, 5, giving a national average of 3.3 for the total population. However, 25% of the Jewish families in Israel have five children and more. These families are overwhelmingly of Asia–Africa origin and are found in the lowest income and education echelons of Israeli society. This is the root of Israel’s most pressing social problems today and for the foreseeable future.

National demographic policy, it must be said, has not been at all enlightened. Israel never took note of the Zero Population Growth campaign that has swept the advanced industrial nations. David Ben Gurion always preached the necessity of Jews having large families for two reasons: first, to compensate, in some degree, for the terrible losses inflicted by the Holocaust, and, secondly, to increase Israel’s population in the face of the overwhelming numbers of Arabs surrounding her. When, by Cabinet decision, the Center for Demographic Studies was set up in the Prime Minister’s Office in 1967, immigration was at a virtual standstill and there was alarm at the decline in the Jewish birthrate between 1951 and 1965 (from 32.7 per thousand to 27.6). Therefore, the purpose of the Center was seen as the encouragement of childbirth, rather than the opposite doctrine, which was beginning to gain currency in the West.

Since 1967, the negative social results of encouraging the wrong families to have more children have become apparent. The indisputable link between large families, low incomes, poor housing and low educa-

tional attainment has led to some revision of thinking. The National Insurance Institute, as well as the Demographic Center, has seen its prime task as pulling up these families to a decent minimum standard of income through a system of child allowances and provision of auxiliary services. But there is growing criticism that not enough is being done to promote family planning and that the dominant health service in the country, *Kupat Holim*, has also done very little to provide birth control advice in its clinics.

Much more must be done to help the mothers of these large families, not in the least because they have been the most frequent clients for abortions in the past. Abortion is still illegal, according to Israeli law, except in cases where medical opinion certifies a danger to the mother's health. The law is mainly observed in the breach, with the police generally looking the other way, but Orthodox opposition to any change in the *status quo* has prevented full scale debate in the Knesset. Indeed, it is the fear of arousing the wrath of religious circles (and thus disturbing the government coalition) which has led to the present ostrich policy concerning family planning and abortion.

Another field in which traditional attitudes predominate is that of child-rearing, especially among immigrant and uneducated groups. It was not until the mid-1960's, with the translation of Dr. Spock's book into Hebrew, that young Israeli mothers had available to them, for the first time, a modern manual on child care. Since there is neither diaper service nor baby food available in Israel, infant care is not much different from what it was a generation ago; women spend much time preparing "mushes" for their babies to eat, either according to grandmother's or the pediatrician's recipe. Breast-feeding (guaranteed against dysentery) and early toilet training still predominate. In view of this early childhood regime, with its emphasis on *stutting* the child, a Freudian certainly would not be surprised that the national obsession (for adults) is eating.

Discipline of children ranges from minimal to excessive, like anywhere in the world. However, two qualifications must be made. For the 15-20% of the population which is Orthodox, discipline remains "old-fashioned" and unquestioned. For Orthodox girls, this means accepting second-class status, separate (and inferior) education, and early marriage. Furthermore, there are communities, mostly in the Asia-Africa category, in which unmarried girls are traditionally under virtual house arrest until marriage. Here the clash between immigrant parents and Israel-born or -educated daughters is severe and, for the small but growing number who run away from home and are forced into prostitution, traumatic as well.

Army service for girls of 18 is one way of escaping excessive parental control. However, the educational level of many girls of these deprived groups is so low that they are not drafted. Many of them also claim ex-

emption on religious grounds, and this, if genuine, is granted. The result is that these girls are married young, probably to someone from a similarly deprived background, and have to make do with an income that is too small to feed the number of children who soon make their unplanned appearance. Thus, Israel's social problems begin to be self-perpetuating.

For the 40% of girls who do have some high school education (and this percentage is growing), many more opportunities are available. Their military service, at present a twenty-month stint, is an unparalleled opportunity to meet all kinds of people and to see the country. While most of the girls perform desk jobs, which free men for active duty, some also serve in intelligence, communications and transport. Girls who have served in the Israel Defense Forces usually join the civilian work force upon completion of service, even in cases where they go on to university or marry. Their total retreat into the confines of the home is not as early as that of girls who never serve in the army at all.

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In conclusion, we see positive and negative trends developing out of the data of these twenty-five years.

— First, the steady improvement in the standard of living has freed most Israeli women from the household drudgery of a generation ago and spurred many to take up outside activities. It must be said, however, that there still has not yet developed the network of volunteer civic activity which is so characteristic of the American Jewish community. (Women's organizations in Israel comprise only a fraction of their potential membership.)

— Second, the talents of the most capable and highly educated women in the country are tremendously under-utilized. This is a waste to the society which invested in their education and a source of frustration to the women themselves. If a determined policy to open up top jobs to women were implemented, there would be candidates to fill them.

— Third, the low educational level of 50% of Israel's women, taken together with the other aspects of deprivation which usually accompany it, has major social consequences. There is need for much more determined government action to help both the women and the men caught in the vise of what begins to look like a situation of self-perpetuating poverty. Family planning to keep the number of children in line with income; vocational training for jobs yielding higher income; and substantial housing assistance are some of the measures which must be implemented, as well as cash assistance, which is only ameliorative.

— Finally, one must note that there is little, if any, evidence that Israeli women understand or feel the need to organize and articulate their specific needs to legislators, medical authorities or political par-

ties. Perhaps this is because so many of them have never viewed themselves as a separate group with special needs and legitimate demands. Perhaps, also, this is because it has never occurred to so many of them that they have rights to education, vocational opportunity and personal freedom equal to those of males—rights which are assumed to belong to every citizen, regardless of sex, in a modern democracy.

For many of Israel's women, a new set of cultural values is replacing the old. Behavior patterns are in flux, aspirations are rising. But all this is taking place on the individual level at the moment, not yet on an organized basis. Therefore, group needs, such as the fight to obtain equal pay for equal work, are slow to be answered. Unless the educated women in Israel organize to articulate the interests of the group as a whole, unless the leadership vacuum is filled, progress will continue to be sporadic. In the absence of determined pressure, the decision makers (male) will not tackle in anything but random fashion the very real and socially critical problems of 50% of the population. The organization of this women's lobby would seem to be the need of the hour. Twenty-five years of Statehood have brought women full circle to the beginning of a new pioneering era.

# *The Status of the Woman in Israel*

SHULAMIT ALONI

MANY WILL BE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT THE image, generally accepted both abroad and in Israel, of the liberated and emancipated Israeli woman is more of a myth than a reality. The origins of the myth stem from the days of the celebrated social revolution begun in the first half of this century by the Second and Third Aliyah.

In a television program on the subject of women's equal rights, screened in August 1972, tens of men were interviewed spontaneously. Whilst those interviewed do not form a representative pattern, the answers given prove interesting, nonetheless. The interview started with a Rabbi (a public personality in Jerusalem) who stated absolutely that women are "irresponsible," and their place is in the home rearing children, and ended with a long line of muscle-parading men who took the view that women are stupid, that the man is the master of the house, that driving is for men only, etc., etc. And this in a country where the Prime Minister is a woman and women hold senior positions in the legal and administrative world! No doubt there are many who hold differing views, but the overall impression is depressing.

As stated, these interviews were spontaneous. Less spontaneous were the results of a survey carried out by the sociologist, Rivka Bar-Yosef, dealing with woman's image and functions as seen through the eyes of women themselves. The image painted was a conservative one. One of the findings showed that the Israeli woman is not involved in political activity, whether on account of lack of time or lack of interest. Golda Meir and the small handful of women active in the political field constitute an exception to the general rule. The majority of those interviewed showed that they were anxious to submit to their husbands' superiority in certain fields in order to preserve harmony in the household. In addition, they related specific and categorized functions to either the husband or the wife, which generally paid homage to the conventional image of the family. Most of them were against artificial abortion on religious or medical grounds.

In recent times, a worsening has occurred in the woman's status as a working individual. The law which laid down equal wages for equal work is not applied in practice. In the transport and communication sectors, the average yearly income of a woman is no more than 42% of the average man's yearly wage. (In 1970, the proportion was 61% of that

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of the man.) In the field of private and public services, the average yearly income of the woman does not exceed 67% of that of the man.

How is it possible to reconcile these phenomena with the widespread image of the emancipated Israeli woman, her complete liberation, her integration into all branches of the economy and national service, including the army and the police force? Where did this image spring from and what is the cause of the regression and change in values which we are now witnessing?

It must be remembered that the status of women in society, like the status of any group, is determined by a number of social and economic factors. For example:

- the official position and length of life of the ruling elite, which serves as a focus for imitation and identification;
- the political ideology which finds its expression in laws, social planning and official propaganda;
- the culture of life, in particular the position of religion—its strength and influence in every-day life and the existence and relationship thereof to preconceived notions and to the views of elder statesmen;
- the economic pressures and needs, social aspirations, consumption and advertising, proper services for children, and the like.

Each of the foregoing and the extent of its influence must be considered at any given period.

In the days before the State (before 1948), these factors allowed the woman in the Jewish Settlement (the Yishuv) to become fully endowed with the yoke of duties and the responsibilities of the society which was then taking shape, and this yoke conferred upon her rights and status equal to those of her male counterpart. The ideology was revolutionary and egalitarian; social and economic needs demanded womanpower and the woman's contribution in public and defense activities. Institutionalized religion was in the background, a factor to be rebelled against, and preconceived opinions were held up to contempt and ridicule. It is no wonder, therefore, that in the Declaration of Independence, the document containing the "principles of faith" of the young State of Israel, a clause was included which stated that the State of Israel "would ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex. . . ."

No constitution was adopted in Israel. Nonetheless, it is worth remembering that in the draft presented to the Constituent Assembly of the Provisional Council of State, at the time when we were still of the opinion that a constitution was to be adopted, the following provisions were included:

4. (1) There will be one rule of law for all inhabitants of Israel. The State will not discriminate between one person and another on the grounds of race, religion, language or sex.



- (2) Equal political and citizen's rights are conferred upon every citizen of Israel. No citizen shall be adversely discriminated against as regards public service or promotion on the grounds of race, religion, language or sex.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the absence of a constitution, these principles of the ruling Council of State were incorporated into the second chapter of the "basic guidelines" of the First Government where we find the statements which are the foundations of the present-day women's liberation movement:

Complete and absolute equality of women will be upheld—equality in rights and duties, in the life of the country, society and economy throughout the entire legal system.<sup>2</sup>

In the seventh chapter, dealing with education, it is stated that

the establishment of a special Ministry for Education and Culture for dealing with the general education of all the children of the State ensures a fair standard of education for every man and woman in Israel.

In the ninth chapter, which deals with labor laws, we read:

the law shall prohibit the employment of women in sectors harmful to mothers . . . assurance of maternity leave with pay with the rights to return to the place of employment . . . shall prevent the employment of a working mother on night work . . . supervision to be established over the employment of youth between the ages of 15 and 18, and the employment of children up to and including the age of 14 is absolutely prohibited. Equal wages will be ensured to both men and women workers for equal work. Institutions for the care and education of the children of mothers working outside the home to be opened.

A single employment exchange to distribute work to applicants without any discrimination of a communal, national, party or any other nature, in accordance with the law which shall so provide.

The living spirit who promised equality and rights for women and gave expression thereto in the basic guidelines of the First Government was the Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, who put these principles into action immediately by inviting Golda Meir to serve as a Minister in his government. Many of the principles included in these guidelines were given legal effect as early as the first decade of the existence of the State.

The election laws conferred equal rights upon men and women. In 1954, the Women's Employment Law was passed, assuring special protection to women in the light of their position and designation as mothers:

- a. No pregnant women to be dismissed from her employment; any person so doing to be deemed as having committed an offense.
- b. 12 weeks maternity leave with pay assured.
- c. Night work and employment of women in especially difficult trades prohibited. (This law has proved a stumbling block and, already, more

1. From the constitution proposed by Leo Cohen.

2. Brought before the Knesset on August 3, 1949 and adopted by it on November 3, 1949.

than one woman has asked for it to be repealed. In practice, in most trades, nowadays, a special permit is granted by the Minister of Labour for the employment of women at night as well.)

The Women's Equal Rights Law of 1951 is considered to be the crowning glory of the assurance of equality for women in the eyes of the law and its principal provision is in the following terms:

A man and a woman shall have equal status with regard to any legal proceeding; any provision of law which discriminates with regard to any legal proceeding, against women as women, shall be of no effect.

It will be seen that the days in the beginning of the State were days of glory for the Israeli woman. The laws were mindful of her achievements and ensured their continuity.

But, in the meantime, new winds were blowing. The Orthodox religious establishment became stronger and with it came religious statutes and education. In the eyes of this establishment, the place of the woman was in the home, bringing up her children and supplying the needs of her husband. The recruitment of girls into the army was decreed by them to be immoral, and young girls declaring that they are Orthodox are exempted from service. The Orthodox rabbis, whose power has been strengthened, have also announced an absolute prohibition against any daughter of Israel serving in the army and they have determined that such army service constitutes a serious crime.

Demographic problems and religious attitudes have been joined together as propaganda for the sake of increasing the birth rate. The child-bearing woman has become more important than the woman who produces something—who works outside her home and who wishes to develop her personality. Monetary prizes are now being distributed to those bringing ten or more children into the world, notwithstanding the fact that such encouragement has increased the poverty of large families and brought ruin to their children. The ignorance and primitiveness of the "Desert Generation" who came to Israel from the Arab countries, in particular from North Africa, has been handed down to the second generation which has grown up in Israel in large and poor families, primitive from the educational and economic point of view. The "Black Panthers" who sprang up in Israel in 1971-2 are a product of this policy of encouragement to childbearing women. Even some of the fathers of these families live on a welfare allowance and refuse to work, on the grounds that they are bringing children into the Israeli army.

Whilst the secular law regards both spouses as heads of the family and equal guardians of their children, the religious family law, which has absolute authority here in the area of relations between spouses and has had such authority since 1953, regards the husband as the master of the house, the head of the family and the responsible breadwinner. This mastery of the husband, which ties the wife to anachronistic religious

laws accompanied by ritual ceremonies dating back hundreds and thousands of years, also brings out a parasitic inclination in the middle class woman, whom the husband is bound to maintain. What may be good and convenient for the fun-loving wife who, by virtue of marriage, acquires for herself a slave-lord whose discipline she obeys in return for his obligation to support her, becomes a disability for the married woman who also works hard in supporting her family. This is because none of the pension laws, income tax calculations or National Insurance benefits relate to her as they do to an independent working man enjoying full rights, since the husband is the breadwinner, according to the operative family laws.

The Israeli housewife who, before the days of the State, achieved the status of "the working woman," organized in a trade union of "working mothers," has been expressly excluded from the definition of worker in the National Insurance Law and enjoys no insurance in case of accident or illness. It is no wonder that a man, whose wife is busy at home from morning to night bringing up his five children, when asked what that wife does, will reply: "She doesn't work, she is a housewife."

Hostels for the children of working mothers have not been established (other than those for needy cases). Kindergartens and schools are closed in the afternoon and have no canteens. Outside work becomes unprofitable because of the need for hiring someone to look after the children, not only the toddlers, who come home from school in the afternoon. The income tax authorities do not recognize as expenses the hiring of services, a baby minder or household help. Women who claim this exemption get the reply, "Well, you do get something for your labors—the satisfaction you derive from going to work outside the house." As if this is a prize to which a woman is not entitled! Why is it clear to Ministers, Judges, and other men who derive satisfaction from their work, that they must receive financial reward as well for their labors, whilst a woman working in her profession must not? "Because her place is first of all at home, it is the natural order of things for her to bring up her children and serve her husband"—these words were uttered by Knesset members who were asked to act on the deduction of expenses for baby minding from taxable income.

This point of view has created feelings of guilt and nervousness in the hearts of women who continue to work, whereas many who stopped working shortly before childbirth have not taken the trouble to return to work thereafter, even though their nerves and their dissatisfaction with housework have done nothing to make the more enlightened amongst them better wives or more comfortable mothers.

The pressure of society, social expectations and the fact that their working was not financially worthwhile has encouraged them to stay at home—in the main, to the satisfaction of their husbands. The fact that

they are not required to share responsibility has allowed laxness, time-wasting and self-preoccupation to creep in, a preoccupation which has been fostered of late and which has derived great encouragement from the plethora which has reached Israel's society in recent years, bringing with it noisy and crazy advertising. Many substantial branches of the economy make their living from the fact that the wife sits at home busy with herself and her household, an occupation which stultifies any enlightened person. In addition, they offer her beauty and fashion preparations, new utensils and new gadgets. From morning to night she listens to flattering advances on the radio which entice her as a consumer and as a housewife, and which distract her attention from her ambitions of creativity or self-expression, from working for gain and independence—independence which brings with it the status of partnership in the family. Instead of being a friend to her husband, she is gradually trained by this commercial brain-washing to change into a dream girl or into a loyal wife who upholds the commandment “to be fruitful and multiply.” Until one day, after the children have grown up, the emptiness comes, and the dissatisfaction which seeks solace in language, ceramic and art classes, in voluntary work and fund-raising whilst enjoying a cup of coffee and watching a fashion show.

The largest women's political movement in Israel, Moezet Hapoalot, has long ceased to be a movement of any political force. It is a good and efficient organization for welfare and social work. Had this movement, which thirty or forty years ago was a revolutionary one, continued to carry out its social-political aims, then the Ministry of Education would have been forced to ensure that all children study the elements of nutrition and housekeeping and that each school have its own canteen in which the children are the cooks and waiters, as was the case many years ago. Had this movement known how to demand the implementation of the promises and declarations made on the establishment of the State, then the Ministry of Housing, the largest planner and builder of popular housing in the country, would have ensured the inclusion of kindergartens and baby homes in each area, to enable young mothers to carry on working whilst their children were under supervision without unnecessary transport problems and expense. Had this movement championed women's rights, then we would have been long ago freed from the laws of *ḥaliṣah* (removing the sandal of a brother-in-law in the law of levirate marriage), *aginut* (the inability of a deserted wife to remarry), and the rest of the anachronistic obstacles under law, which restrict and humiliate the woman on account of her formally being the exclusive property of her husband from whom no other person could confiscate his rights; in children's books we would have seen the image of the working, productive woman, not only that of a housewife who bakes, or of a poverty stricken widow doing housework to bring up her orphans.

And thus, in Israeli society, the burden of responsibility has passed to the male, and, of course, it is natural that he who carries the responsibility gets more rights and is in a stronger position. Even after the statements, slogans, and a substantial section of the laws which ensure the equality of the sexes, the inhabitants of Israel, both men and women, are becoming partners to a general agreement, cemented by both silent acquiescence and deed, to the effect that the function of the woman results from her biological makeup and, therefore, she must, first and foremost, take care of the house and her children. Amongst the weaker classes, her going out to work is only for the purpose of balancing the budget until the husband earns enough to do so, and as soon as it is possible it is preferred that she stop. Amongst the more enlightened classes the wife's going out to work, which, in the eyes of the legislator and the tax system which he has laid down, is superfluous, is entertainment, is for the satisfaction of her ego, but is not a necessity. Accordingly, a woman's ambitions for advancement, apart from those few who are among the most enlightened and educated and whose advancement is understood, are considered somewhat disgraceful.

But all this is not yet mentioned in Israel openly. The ideology of the first years of the State still has some influence. In the free professions and the institutions of higher learning there is no discrimination between the sexes, and for the woman who still wants to strive for achievements and advance, the road is open, just as it is for the males. Proud political leaders of the Israeli society still point out that girls serve in the army, the settlement, and in the police force. There still lives a part of the generation in which men and women worked side by side in laying roads, in swamp reclamation and settlement building, and who dreamed the dream of the egalitarian society in which a person is a person, without discrimination as to sex, and could achieve individuality.

It is still possible to save us from the great regression which is consuming us without our being aware of it, and which has a continuous influence on the sub-conscious. The awakening of women in the Western world, their rebellion against the concept of "bunnies," "kittens," "sitters-at-home," against the powerful advertising industry which turns us into consumers running after products we do not want whilst we bind ourselves to vanity and our husbands to overtime—it is good that this awakening has reached Israel, and it is right that it should ring the warning bells before we, too, are washed away in this foolish world. The Israeli woman is in no need of street demonstrations or revolutionary war-cries. She needs to know her rights and to desire to enforce them. But she must remember that she cannot enforce her rights without assuming responsibility.

Our tragedy is that the men are happy to relieve us of duties and

responsibility, and in so doing they deprive us of our rights. Our tragedy is that too many women are pleased to be thus deprived. So long as most Israeli women and their spokesmen take the view that it is the unchallenged function of the man to give support, he, in turn, will not consider them as having equal rights, whether in the home, in the community, the party or the political institutions which play a determining role in the fate of society.

The Jewish religion has imposed upon the male many duties, but it is no accident that every day he says: "Blessed be He who has not made me a woman," for the performance of duties is what gives him rights, authority and ownership. The person who wants liberty and equality must assume duties and responsibility. This is a difficult decision which frightens the women from whom society neither requires nor expects such a thing.

Everyone accepts it as reasonable for a woman to serve as an ambassador—this we have achieved. But it is also accepted that there is no husband who would be willing to accompany his wife, the ambassadress, and even if he did, he would not dare to do so for fear of offending conventional opinions as to the status of the man in the family.

When a husband and wife achieve equal recognition in the family and in society, at that time there will be equality. But for this to come about, it would be necessary to change all of our books of learning from their very beginning, to overcome and get rid of many sacred clichés—and this is far from simple. There exists, in Jewish society, the commandment, "to be fruitful and multiply;" it is a very important commandment and applies to the male. How can a man, who can neither conceive nor bear children, know if a child is really his son? From this problem has grown man's complex which has placed the woman in bondage. From this fact stems, in my opinion, the ritual of virginity, the awful duty of faithfulness, imposed on the Jewish woman towards her husband, even if he has gone out of his mind or disappeared—as though she were a tool for bearing his children and a mere item of his property. From this fact stem the outrageous laws of bastardy which apply to children born to married women who have not been properly divorced according to the ritualistic intricacies of the halakhah.

In Israel, where Orthodox religious coercion has gained strength through coalition agreements and political needs, people do not wish to admit that this coercion is merely a political expedient. Accordingly, mysticism and glorifications have been created around it. The pledging of women to laws which consider them as an instrument for childbearing, as simpleminded, as their husbands' possession under the guise of slogans like "Sanctification of Religion," "Israel the Everlasting," "an age-old tradition ensuring the perpetuation of the Jews," etc., make no contribution towards the advancement and liberation of women. The

religious pressures and religious laws which discriminate against the woman as a person on the one hand, and the modern education which is to be had in Israel, along with the pride of the *halutz* period and women's achievements in building up the country on the other, create in Israel a double standard of morals and tradition. From it follow the deep conflicts between anachronistic burdens and the many freedom movements. Alongside the splendid achievements in society, in education and in the free professions in which the Israeli woman can take pride, we find the humiliating and burdensome darkness.

Perhaps the amazing demonstrations of the women of the United States, Holland and England, the lessening of the advantage which physical strength confers upon man, and the international declarations for equal rights will spark off our national pride and we shall again wish to prove that we have not fallen behind others. Perhaps by force of this pride, a pride which spurs on young nations, we shall once again attain the wonderful achievements reached by Jewish women in the days of the Second and Third Aliyah.

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